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# **Tangihanga: Through the eyes of young Māori women**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Tangihanga describes the Māori customary way of approaching death. The aim of this research is to explore the tangihanga experiences of young Māori women. The meanings they create, the learning they experience, and the social relationships they negotiate whilst at tangihanga are of interest. The contribution that tangihanga makes to mediating bereavement, grief and loss will also be investigated. This research seeks to broaden the understanding around the practices, beliefs and meanings that are associated with the processes of Tangihanga as experienced by young Māori women.

This study interviewed young Māori women between the ages of eighteen to twenty four. Face to face interviews were carried out with the use of a semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews provided access to the participant's experiences and understanding of tangihanga and the customary practices that are associated with it.

The findings from this study support the notion that the tangihanga is a fundamental event for Māori. The participants found tangi to be a place where their relationships within both their immediate and extended whānau were strengthened. This setting allowed the young women to express their grief in an open and supportive environment surrounded by their whānau. The tangi also provided a place of learning for the young women as they learned about the tikanga and kawa or customary practices in relation to tangihanga. This learning occurred in a number of ways; by observation, through participation and the receiving of instruction from older family members. Thus the tangi provided the opportunity for the transfer of cultural knowledge between generations. These findings suggest that the tangi plays an important role in young women's lives as it provides them with access to Māori communities and cultural learning. The challenge for us today is to ensure that these opportunities continue to occur for young Māori women.

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## GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

Aroha	<i>love, compassion</i>
Hapū	<i>relational kinship network</i>
Harirū	<i>to shake hands</i>
Hongi	<i>pressing of noses to greet</i>
Iwi	<i>tribal group</i>
Karanga	<i>welcoming call</i>
Kaikaranga	<i>the woman who has the role of making the ceremonial welcoming call</i>
Kaumātua	<i>elderly man, elderly leader</i>
Kaupapa Māori	<i>Māori ideology- a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society</i>
Kawa	<i>protocols</i>
Kōhā	<i>gift, offering</i>
Kuia	<i>elderly woman, elderly leader</i>
Marae	<i>where formal meetings and discussion takes place, ancestral meeting place</i>
Manaakitanga	<i>hospitality, kindness</i>
Manuhiri	<i>visitor, guests</i>
Pākehā	<i>New Zealander of European descent</i>
Poroporoaki	<i>to take leave, farewell ceremony</i>
Poupou	<i>carved panel in a meeting house</i>
Pōwhiri	<i>invitation, rituals of welcome</i>

Rangatahi	<i>younger generation</i>
Tangata-whenua	<i>hosts/ local people</i>
Tangi/tangihanga	<i>funeral, rites of the dead</i>
Tapu	<i>sacred</i>
Tikanga	<i>correct procedure, custom</i>
Tino rangatiratanga	<i>self-determination</i>
Tūpāpaku	<i>corpse, deceased</i>
Waiata	<i>to sing</i>
Wairua	<i>spirit, soul</i>
Whaikōrero	<i>oratory, formal speech-making</i>
Whakanoa	<i>to remove tapu, to make secular</i>
Whakapapa	<i>genealogy, lineage, descent</i>
Whānau	<i>family</i>
Whānau pani	<i>chief mourners, bereaved family</i>
Whānaungatanga	<i>relationship, kinship, sense of family connection</i>
Wharekai	<i>dining hall</i>
Wharenui	<i>communal meeting house</i>



## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I will examine literature that discusses a young person's development and explore how young women behave and are socialized within certain environments. This study attempts to discover the meanings that are created and the learning that is experienced for young Māori women while at tangihanga (tangi). The institutions in which these young women learn and develop their identity are of interest, as this research will explore how tangi may be seen as a learning environment. Literature pertaining to cultural practices and specifically death rituals is examined and the way in which young people are taught how to behave appropriately within these settings will be discussed. Although tangihanga may be commonplace within Aotearoa, its specific rituals and the meanings attributed to this process may impact on individuals in different ways. It is the diversity of experience that is of interest to this research, as the contemporary interpretations of tangihanga have yet to be explored fully.

This review has been broken up into sections to allow the researcher to provide the context of this study. An exploration of the current research that discusses death, cultural practices and understandings about death will be provided. As tangihanga is the area of interest a description of the integral parts of this ceremony will be discussed and the relevant literature pertaining to this will be reviewed. Lastly, literature that explores the aspects of adolescent development will be explored. This includes a discussion of literature pertaining to identity development, socialisation, and the importance of relationships during this stage and the roles and responsibilities of young people. The literature reviewed in this section provides a basis for this study.

#### **Death**

Death is a universal concept and something that all people must deal with at some point in their life. It is something that affects us all therefore there is an infinite variety in the ways that people respond to death and the way in which a person views death. This is largely affected by a person's death experiences, religious beliefs, professional background and the media's representations of death (Mak,

2013). Some people are exposed to death at a young age while others may be much older when they first encounter death. There are a number of reasons why a young person may be exposed to death; such as the loss of a sick parent or grandparent, war, the loss of a sibling, famine, illness, disease and many other reasons. We also live in a society surrounded by media which has contributed to exposing young people to forms of death. These representations can have an influence on how a young person may perceive death but these representations can often be inaccurate and portray death in a superficial manner (Vianello & Lucamante, 2001; Young & Papadatou, 1997). Thus, it can be an inappropriate source for which young people gain their understanding of death (Jacob, 2011).

Culture also has a major influence over the way in which a person responds to death and the meaning that is attributed to this. Young and Papadou (1997) suggest that there are cultural differences in how young people acquire their knowledge and understanding around death. Naturally, the loss of a loved one can be a traumatic and a stressful time for the bereaved and those close to them but this may be more so for younger people. A young person's understanding of death and the form that their mourning takes can be influenced by their developmental stage at the time of the death (Aumen, 2007).

While a person is coming to terms with the death of a significant person they are considered to be in a state of bereavement. The effects of this bereavement can impact a person in a number of ways including physically, cognitively, emotionally, interpersonally behaviourally and spiritually (Balk, 2011). Greeff, Vansteenwegen and Herbiest (2011) outline the phases of bereavement; they suggest that the first phase involves a form of psychological numbing. This includes feelings of disbelief and denial of the pain that is related to the loss. The second phase of grieving is a process of gradual awareness, this involves an increased realisation that the deceased person has departed and will not return. The third phase is called acute grieving and this phase is considered to be one of acceptance. The last phase is the recovery phase. In this phase an individual invests time and energy in other activities, such as social contacts and work.

Fleming and Adolph (1986) researched the links between adolescent development and bereavement and they explain that bereavement requires adolescents to cope

behaviourally, cognitively and affectively with five core issues. These are the predictability of events, mastery and control, belonging, fairness and justice, and self-image. They explain that all adolescents may face these core issues but the death of a family member or friend makes the issues more poignant. Other dynamics that may also affect a child's grief and bereavement processes include their parent's response to grief and the effectiveness of family support systems (Aumen, 2007).

McRae (2010) explains grief as being both a physical and psychological manifestation of loss. An example of "physical grief may be expressed through wailing and crying, whereas psychological grief may involve refusing to accept the loss of a loved one or a state of depression that derives from the realisation of what has been lost" (p.18). Valentine, (2006) notes that previous research on the topic of grief explains it as being unresolved, abnormal, complicated, chronic, and prolonged. Although this may be the case for some people it may not be the case for all individuals that are navigating this phase of bereavement. It has been well documented that explaining and helping children understand the concept of death can significantly reduce any fear, anxiety and other emotional or behavioural responses associated with mourning the death of a loved one (Turner, 2006). It is also important that when a young person is grieving, that they obtain reassurance that the ways in which they are grieving or experiencing grief are not unusual.

Previous research (Kaunonen, Tarkka, Paunonen, & Laippala, 1999; Rask, Kaunonen, & Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2002; Balk, 2011) has also emphasised the vital role that family and friends have for young people whilst grieving. During this time it is important that a young person be able to feel that they are listened to. They also need a safe place where they can think out loud and express their emotions. Family and friends can provide this space and the support essential for this time (Doka, 2002). It could be said that the tangihanga or the traditional Māori approach towards death provides such an environment consequently this will be explored in the next section.

### **Tangihanga**

The Tangihanga (tangi) is the traditional Māori process whereby whānau (family) and community come together to grieve the death of a loved one. Tangihanga is

the term used to describe Māori death ceremonies that can involve 2-3 days of mourning (Mead, 2003). These ceremonies traditionally take place at the marae (an ancestral meeting place); however today tangi are often held in other settings such as the home, funeral parlours and educational institutions (Edge, Nikora, Rua, 2010). People gather at the marae to pay their respects and grieve with the family. Many travel great distances to be part of the ceremony and to mourn the deceased; as no other ceremony is more effective in mobilising Māori (Mead, 2003; Sinclair, 1990). During tangi the life of the deceased is celebrated, acknowledged and they are farewelled from the physical world (Drewery & Bird, 2004). This process of mourning seeks to extend the grief to a more shared burden of feeling in the larger community or collective. In cultures that are less individualistic and are more socially connected, such as Māori, grief is a tightly communal and a shared experience (Billmoria, 2011).

There are different protocols and formalities that exist around tangi which Ngata (2005) describes as being an event that is steeped with tapu and kawa. Each hapū and/or iwi holds different customary practices following the death of a loved one, although there are threads of similarity that are found throughout Māoridom.

There are numerous examples of the different tikanga that exist around the country amongst the different iwi and marae. For example some marae welcome guests all through the day and night and other marae will only formally welcome visitors during the day. It is up to each marae and the people associated with it to dictate the protocols for that particular area as “each marae evolves a system that encompasses its particular beliefs and is suitable for its people” (Tauroa & Tauroa, 1993). These beliefs and ideas are upheld by cultural experts that are on hand at the marae, during tangi they advise and direct in these matters (Mead, 2003).

Barlow (1991) provides a description of how tangi are enacted in the Far North in his book *Tikanga Whakaaro*. I have chosen to use this description as it fits with my own experiences of tangihanga as I whakapapa (genealogical links) to that area. He explains that once a person has died the marae must be prepared; this is usually a task undertaken by the tangata whenua or the local people affiliated with the marae where the body will be taken. Two important things need to be carried out before the body arrives; the preparation of food and the arrangement of the wharenui.

Once the body has arrived the women perform the karanga and the procession begins to make its way onto the marae. The coffin is taken in and is placed on the centre of the floor at the back wall of the wharenuī. The lid is taken off and the people are given time to pay their condolences to the deceased and to one another. This may be carried out through the expressions of concern, shedding of tears and wailing. After this the formal speeches are carried out with both visitors and locals having time to speak. This process of speeches and the expressing of condolences are then repeated with every group of visitors hosted throughout the tangi. Usually the body lies in state for three nights and is buried on the following day. Services are carried out daily during the time at the marae and a final one is undertaken before the burial. After the burial the mourners are then invited to take part in the haka. This description of the tangihanga provides a rudimentary outline of the formalities involved with the tangi today but as mentioned previously there are a number of customary practices that vary amongst the different iwi of Aotearoa.

Nikora and Awekotuku (2013) also provide a description of this event and explain that “the pattern of tangi is best understood as a series of waves washing in and out. As visitors arrive to pay their respects, waves of memory made heavy with grief crash down on the mourners” (p.170). For Māori the institution of tangi provides a customary way to respond to death. As it is an enculturated pattern that is learned through repeat engagements that begin in childhood (Jacobs, Nikora & Ritchie, 2011). This time spent whilst on the marae remains a time that is set apart from ordinary experience. Tangihanga is a time for Māori to set aside commonplace regular activities and spend time moving through the grieving process. As for the duration of the tangi the bereaved decline to engage in everyday activities; as mourning and its social consequences dominate their lives (Sinclair, 1990). Nikora and Awekotuku (2013) add that the “arrival at the marae marks the beginning of a period of ritualized mourning, of withdrawal by the bereaved from the mundane activities of everyday life” (p. 170).

### ***Benefits of tangihanga***

Being involved in funeral and burial rites is a valuable process that serves many purposes. The tangi process allows one to deal with some important aspects pertaining to bereavement. It allows family members to achieve closure to the

deceased's life, it also provides an environment where mourners are able to feel the reality of death, and it can provide access to support from the social networks surrounding the grieving family (Aumen, 2007).

The tangi allows for the open expression of grief, the expressing of one's grief is encouraged and supported, as the environment aims to share the grief of the bereaved with the broader community. Death in other settings can be a very private affair but this is not the case for Māori, this like many other occasions within Māoridom is a shared experience. This is supported by Nikora et al. (2013) with this description:

Their grief is anticipated. We expect them to be “out of it,” “a mess” “freaking out”, numb, shocked and traumatised, and on “autopilot.” We do not encourage them to bear up and man it out. We recognise their agonizing's, their sobbing, public lamentation, as part of a familiar process. We create a dedicated space for this to happen, ever conscious of the need for respite from the intensity of memory and heaving emotions. (p.170)

For Māori, the tangihanga can be an integral part of the healing process (Herbert, 2001). Even though when a death occurs it is a time of emotional upheaval, for all that are mourning, the tangihanga provides Māori with a sense of comfort and safety (Dansey, 1995). “So in death, drawn by the ties of love and respect and sorrow, the people gather to mourn. This is the tangihanga” (Dansey, 1995, p.110).

### ***Tupapaku***

Tupapaku is the Māori term used to reference the deceased. After a death has occurred the level of interaction that one has with the deceased is often a personal decision. In some funeral settings it may be acceptable to talk to, or greet the deceased. In other settings a simple viewing of the casket at the time of the service maybe as much interaction that one may have with the deceased. This may be due to a number of reasons, such as the direct wishes of the family; cause of death which results in a closed casket or other reasons but more often than not access to the deceased is limited.

Dansey (1995) discusses the differences in the way in which the dead are viewed by Māori in contrast to Pākehā for Māori “the dead are to be cared for, cherished,

mourned, spoken to, honoured in a way which others might consider to be over-emotional and over-demonstrative” (p. 108). In comparison he describes the Pākehā attitude towards death as appearing to be based on the belief that the dead must be hurried away and hidden from sight. It appears that cultural practices determine the level of interaction that one has with the body of the deceased during funerals. As one’s culture informs what is deemed appropriate or inappropriate with grief expressions (Peveto, 2001). Jacob (2011) expands on this idea by explaining that “what may be considered appropriate and normal expressions of grief in one culture may be seen as inappropriate in another” (p.7).

Māori have a distinctive way in which they deal with the deceased. For Māori once a death has occurred the body of the deceased is rarely left alone. The family of the bereaved or whānau pani (bereaved family), stay with the tupapaku until the time of the burial. Ngata (2005) explains that this is because Māori believe “that the body and soul of the deceased must be kept continually warm and comfortable by the presence of kinfolk in order to appease the spirit and to assist it on its journey to the spirit world” (p. 33). In many cases while at the marae the coffin is left open so that the people can touch the tupapaku. Speeches are made directly to the deceased in the belief that the spirit does not leave the vicinity of the body until the burial (Tauroa & Tauroa, 1993).

There are also specific tikanga and kawa that are practised in relation to the tūpāpaku. Like many aspects of tikanga these practices may vary between different iwi and marae. They also vary in major and minor facets of the tangi process in relation to the tūpāpaku. An instance of this is the placement of the tūpāpaku. I have personally attended a number of tangi at different marae and have viewed the tūpāpaku laid in a number of different locations. Mead (2003) explains that the placement of the body is important and the location varies from region to region as there are different tikanga associated with the placement of the body once it has been brought on to the marae. In parts of the north and west of the North Island the body is placed against the back wall in the centre of the wharenuī and in other areas it may lie on the veranda of the wharenuī. In eastern areas the body is usually placed on the right hand side of the wharenuī up against the third or fourth wall post.

Dansey (1995) encapsulates the importance that the deceased has for Māori:

Our dead are very close to us in Māoridom. They do not lie alone in that short space between death and burial. We stay with them every minute and talk to them and sing to them. When we have returned them to the earth we remember them in song and speech. Each time we meet one another after being apart, we pause we weep again, no matter how happy the occasion for our meeting. (p.116)

When looking at the descriptions of tangihanga within the literature tangi may appear as a very formal occasion that is governed by rigid specific cultural traditions. This in many ways is an accurate description but it also may paint an unclear view of what actually happens at tangi. These descriptions may well infer that the cultural practices undertaken could have an almost imposing nature on mourners and guests to the marae, but this is not the case for Māori as “at times of death, custom is a lifeline. It affords security, comfort and reassurance about what to do next and that the right things will be done” (Nikora, Masters & TeAwekotuku, 2013, p. 4).

This section has discussed death, bereavement and tangihanga. The influence that culture has on death, bereavement and funeral practices has also been briefly reviewed. It appears that for Māori the institution of tangi is noteworthy of research and is a fundamental aspect within the Māori culture. There is currently a growing body of literature (for example, Edge, Nikora, & Rua, 2011; Jacobs, Nikora & Ritchie, in press; Rua, Rua, Te Awekotuku, & Nikora, 2010) that has investigated this cultural event and some of the unique ways in which Māori approach death. This study aims to add to this knowledge base with regards to the impacts that this event has for young people today. The next section within this chapter will review literature pertaining to adolescent development. It is important to provide a brief review of literature that discusses the unique characteristics of this stage of development with regards to this study.

## **Adolescence**

I am interested in finding out about the experiences of young Māori women at tangi. As there is a large amount of literature that discusses the different aspects of



adolescence, this review will focus on providing a brief description of the adolescent stage of development and describe some of the associated conflicts within this stage. A review of literature that discusses the influence that culture may have during this stage of development will also be carried out.

Each culture recognises a time of passage from childhood to adulthood. In our society, the beginning is usually marked by the onset of puberty, and the end is marked by the acceptance of adult responsibilities and privileges of early adulthood. (Davis & Stoep, 1996, p.4)

Adolescence marks a major life change, the transition from childhood to adulthood. This stage of development is accompanied by changes in every aspect of individual development and every social context (Kerig & Wenar, 2006). The age that adolescence occurs is not clear cut but it can roughly range between the ages of ten and twenty. This is a time that is signified by many changes and one of the most dramatic is the biological changes that are associated with puberty. This involves a dramatic shift in one's body shape, increases in hormones and changes in brain architecture. These biological shifts are directly linked with changes in sexual interest and both cognitive and physical capacities (Eccles, 2002). This stage is often described as an awkward time for teens as they adjust to these dramatic changes of a maturing body.

Santrock (2001) explains that during adolescence biological, emotional or psychosocial conflicts are evident. Adolescents are learning to cope with changes while concerned with self-image, self-esteem, social expectations and academic achievement. During this time young people are trying to find out who they are, separate from their family. What they are about, including developing their interests and personalities and where they are going in order to discover their place in adult life.

In most societies, sexual maturity alone does not convey full adult status, with all its rights and responsibilities. Biologically determined sexual maturity usually precedes culturally defined social maturity (Peoples & Bailey, 2009). In viewing this stage of life from an anthropological perspective, adolescence is usually discussed with reference to the rites of passage that occur within cultures which help transition a child to a full functioning adult. So what are rites of passage?

These rites of passage are certain initiations that occur before a person is given adult status. During this time a member may be exposed to a number of experiences from piercing, cutting, dancing, feasting and much more. These rites often serve to reinforce the dominant values of a society through ceremony and speech (Howard, 1996). “These ceremonies usually help the adolescent and others to redefine their roles and to make expectations of the new roles clear” (Alsaker, 1995). For Māori rites of passage included taking on more responsibility in cultural settings, and this involved learning and obtaining skills in such things as tribal history, karakia, waiata and other forms of cultural knowledge (Caddie, 2010). Ware and Walsh-Tapiata (2010) also add that the rites of passage progression often occurs over a prolonged period of time in order to develop and prepare young members of indigenous societies for their roles in the wider collective.

Arnett (1999), explains that this stage of a person’s development has often been characterised as being a turbulent time filled with mood swings, experimentation and inner turmoil, but this may not be the case as “not all adolescents experience storm and stress, but storm and stress is more likely during adolescence than at other stage” (pg. 317). If this is such a confusing time for young people then how can involvement in cultural activities mitigate some of the stress during this stage? Research (French, Seidman, Allen & Aber, 2006; Webber, 2012; Hokaumau & Sibley, 2010) suggests that involvement and identification with one’s culture can have a positive impact for young people. Te Hoe Nuku Roa (1996) found that Māori who identified more strongly with their culture had better general health than those who did not.

Arnett (2001) also suggests that after a young person has gone through adolescence that instead of moving into adult status young people may be moving on to something that is described as an ‘emerging adult’. It is he suggests, an ‘in between period, not adolescence but not quite adulthood either’ (2001, p.15). There may be a number of explanations for this as circumstances change with social, cultural and economic developments (Hartley, 1990). One explanation for this here in New Zealand may be young people’s prolonged financial dependency on parents (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). Contrary to this, research carried out by Abel & Fitzgerald (2008) found that the young people from disadvantaged

families in their study had a short lived experience of adolescence. They transitioned into emerging adulthood status due to a lack of access to support services and resources. This study emphasised the importance for young people to have access to support and resources while going through the transition of adolescence.

Within traditional Māori communities, with age came responsibilities and certain obligations, though these were not clearly set by the physical signs of adulthood. Ritchie (1979) explains that it is up to the individual to assume the new status. Unlike western societies, where adult status is given or assigned by adult recognition, it has always been true of Polynesian societies that the transition is made by the decision and the actions of the individual, when he or she indicates. The marks of transition are entry into associations of young people, recognition by adults and participation in the ceremonial life of the family and or tribe, even if this is only as an apprentice observer (Ritchie, 1979).

If however young people are not moving into adult roles or if they are moving too fast into full adult status then what effects might this have on cultural and societal demands? For Māori communities like others often a leader or adult is required to direct cultural protocols and to take charge or help instruct younger generations. Māori rites of passage in both traditional and contemporary Māori communities include rituals, processes and events that are connected to whakapapa, whānau and the cycle of life (Caddie, 2010). If young people are not emerging in to adult roles then who is left to take on those positions of responsibility and how is this negotiated today?

### **Socialisation**

“Culture is a social construct that is usually understood in and through the contents of its traditions-its feelings, modes of action, forms of language, aspirations, interpersonal relations, images, ideas, and ideals” (Rodriguez & Fortier, 2007, pg. 8). As it is a social construct culture can be difficult to define but it is an important concept in the psychological field because it has a major influence on human behaviour. In essence, it helps to define one’s place in the world (Ebbet & Clarke, 2010). The traditions within one’s culture pass on from generation to generation, and carry a world of meaning. They carry the personal as

well as communal experiences of a people: the implicit and explicit understandings, myths and stories that actualise the potential of the human person (Rodriguez & Fortier, 2007).

How one learns the norms within their group or culture is of interest. The early experiences in a child's life are considered the most critical in forming an individual's personality and in socialising that individual to the ways of their society. Socialisation refers to the processes by which people learn the norms, rules and information of a culture or group (Kassin, Fein & Markus, 2010). Social learning theory suggests that people learn the norms of the group from one another, via observation, imitation and modelling. A person forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this information serves as a guide for action (Bandura, 1971). Thus young people gain a large amount of information by absorbing what they see and hear around them within their culture, groups and families (Kassin et al., 2010).

This is no different for young Māori women. Within Māori families and broader communities individuals learn about the social norms and expectations by observation and through direct experience. Nikora et al., (2012) speaks to the influence that whānau has on the process of enculturation as well as the importance of having access to cultural experiences, "although the whānau unit is a critical agent of enculturation, one only really comes to live and know the reality of the Māori world by participating in it" (p.409). This point is of concern, because if participating in cultural contexts is so important; with the effects of colonisation not all Māori continue to have access to cultural contexts so many remain alienated from Māori people and their communities (Jahnke, 2002). This alienation may have an impact on how a young person learns' about, and takes part in customary practices and how they may feel in cultural environments. This is of concern for some Māori youth, as living in an environment that does not recognise certain tikanga could be detrimental and block them from achieving to their full potential (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010).

The literature suggests that young people learn and are socialised into environments by observation and by being involved explicitly. So if not all Māori are gaining access to Māori communities how are they then socialised into

cultural settings? How do they learn about their cultural traditions and practices? This research is interested in gaining an understanding of how young Māori women are socialised into the environment of tangi, how they learn what to do and from whom and to gauge their understandings behind these cultural practices.

### **Family/ Whānaungatanga**

The family relationship is widely recognised as being a vital part of the context of wellbeing for young people. Crucial to the family environment is the relationship between young people and their parents or caregivers (McCreanor, Watson & Denny, 2006). For Māori communities the family is established from a cultural and a historical base, it is constructed on strong genealogical links and relationships, as Māori culture embraces a holistic worldview that emphasises the importance of ancestry, whānau, and tradition (Metge, 1967, 1986). According to Ritchie (1992) whānaungatanga is one of the most valued aspects in Māori society. This value may be described as a commitment to the collective, in which the individual is expected to subordinate their interests for those of the whānau or hapū. This meant traditionally that responsibility was regarded as lying primarily with the collective and not with the individual (Patterson, 1992).

Collectivist cultural views in Aotearoa today suggest that from birth, the infant is already enmeshed in the relationships of family and community. Within Māori culture the family rather than the individual is seen as the unit of development (Drewery & Bird, 2004). For Māori the whānau traditionally was the place where initial teaching and socialisation of things Māori took place (Durie, 1994). Due to the effects of colonisation and migration from rural areas to urban areas, there has been a break-up of these traditional family structures (Liu & Temara, 1998; Metge, 1995).

Despite this break-up of traditional family structures many Māori have continued to identify with and have respect for customary practices (Ryan, 2011). During adolescence there is often a conflict between parents and young people. This may be due to the issues of control and autonomy within the family, which are renegotiated during this developmental period (Eccles et al., 1993). Although most individuals are able to navigate adolescent stages of development without significant distress, others are not as fortunate. The transition appears to be more

complicated for adolescents who experience a sense of mistrust and feel disconnected with their family (Daniels, 1990).

It is in the family environment that many young people cultivate their experiences, attitudes and learning. This appears to be the case for many Māori families. As Dansey (1995) describes, the Māori relationship is much extended and so are the rights and responsibilities of the relationship. The family is seen as being one of the major institutions where rangatahi receive learning support, self-esteem and self-worth. In Merrit's (2003) study with young Māori girls she investigated the protective factors that help young Māori women to achieve whilst overcoming hardships and adversities in their life. Her findings show the importance of family systems, as family support was vital in the girls' lives in reinforcing a sense of connectedness, grounding and a sense of unconditional love. Further research has also found that strong family connectedness reduces the risk for suicide attempts for Māori youth across all levels of risk (Clark et al., 2011). As it has been suggested that feeling a part of one's own family and community is an important aspect of development in a young person's life; the tangihanga may provide an environment where the ties between the whānau may be strengthened. For the family of the bereaved tangi may be a time where a lot of stress can be placed on the family unit; however the process of tangi can also provide access to broader networks of support through extended family. Thus, the tangihanga becomes a way of maintaining these important relationships.

## **Relationships**

Youth is seen as a life stage through which one must pass in order to move from childhood to adulthood (Drewery & Bird, 2004). One vital aspect of this stage is the building of social networks. As it is a basic human motivation to see one self as being socially connected (McDonald & Leary, 2005). This is an on-going process from early childhood to adulthood and is accepted by psychologists, sociologists and lay people as an important part of human growth (Ritchie, 1984, Forehand, 1993). Friends can be of enormous importance at any age but during adolescence friends become increasingly depended on to share the ups and downs of life's experiences. Friendships can provide another avenue of support outside of the family for young people, as young people have been found to depend more

on friends than on parents to satisfy their needs for companionship, reassurance of worth and intimacy (Santrock, 2006).

Friends may also expose a young person to peer pressure during adolescence and this can have a positive or negative impact (Drewery & Bird, 2004). The nature of adolescent association groups among Māori suggest that though some of the formal traditional structures have changed, young people support one another in making the transition to adult status through groups that look like gangs in the modern sense but which Metge, regards as a modern equivalent of a traditional function (Ritchie, 1979).

Whānaungatanga is an important aspect of Māori society and this extends not only to direct family members but close friends as well. Friends become close due to shared experiences and a common cause. Individuals are sustained by these connections and these relationships provide young people with support in the forms of emotional, cultural, social and financial support (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010).

It appears that relationships are vital to the young person whilst negotiating adolescence. Literature supports the notion that friends provide support and comfort for young people whilst they move through this stage of development. Friends also play an important role in identity development as they offer insight into characteristics and values that others possess, and they provide a perspective that cannot be attained in other relationships (Hafen, Laursen, & DeLay, 2012). Thus it is important to discuss identity development and how these factors interconnect during this time.

## **Identity**

Intertwined with the struggles of moving through adolescence and negotiating relationships is the concept of identity formation. On a basic level identity involves recognition, categorization and self-identification as a member of a particular group (Ward, 2006, p.245). The study of this concept is central in the study of adolescence and previous research suggests that in order to make the transition from being dependent on parents to becoming dependent on oneself, the adolescent must develop a stable sense of self. Erickson (1963) describes identity

formation as the primary developmental task during adolescence. He explains that the notion of identity encompasses a sense of one's uniqueness, a sense of wholeness with one's self and a sense that one's ideals and values are also valued by others (Erickson, 1970).

Research has also proposed intimacy as being closely linked to identity development and suggested that the level of felt security in familial relationships guides the desire and capacity for increased intimacy in future interactions. This indicates that intimacy is linked to the formation of identity and serves as an important developmental task during this stage (Coll, Powell, Thobro & Haas, 2010). This research reinforces the idea of the importance of those people around the individual and the impact that they have throughout this stage of development, but this may not be applicable to all cultures as identity or one's self concept is heavily influenced by cultural factors (Kassin et al., 2010).

For Māori a strong association with whānau, hapū and iwi are considered to be central to Māori identity (Hokaumau & Sibley, 2010). As culture is considered important in identity development, attendance at tangihanga and other cultural functions may provide a format for the development of identity for young Māori women. Research carried out with Māori women has shown that a 'Māori identity' is formed during a person's early years whilst growing up in cultural contexts; associated with their homeland (Jahnke, 2002). Other research has attempted to describe the factors involved in order to create a Māori identity. The use of the Māori language, links with the land and spirituality have all been considered to be aspects that contribute to Māori identity (Barlow, 1991; Rangihau, 1975; Durie, 1995). Pere (1988) outlines six elements of Māori identity:

- A relationship with the land (which provides a sense of belonging).
- Spirituality (which provides a sense of meaning, connection and purpose).
- Ancestral ties (which provide ancestral-based wisdom and appropriate guidelines for living).
- Tikanga Māori (customs which carry values and cultural practices unique to Māori people).



- Kinship ties (which carry obligations to contribute to well-being of the family and extended family).
- A sense of humanity (which involves sense belonging to a wider community).

These elements combined insure a secure cultural identity (Durie, 1995). Jahnke's (2002) research with Māori women supports this as she found that a sense of home- place helped these women to construct, reinforce and maintain a sense of cultural identity. This is of importance for Māori as research has revealed that identifying with one's culture or having a 'Māori identity' is important for young people to be successful. Webber (2012) found that a positive racial-ethnic identity was significant for Māori adolescents as it allowed them to repel negative stereotypes and accommodate other positive attributes, such as academic achievement into their identity. Sinclair (1990) adds that the tangi provides an arena where Māori identity can be formulated and sustained through its rituals that serve to emphasise the continuity to the past with the present.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Everyone has certain roles within different settings. "Roles define people's places within a social structure. In the psychological literature, a role refers to the behaviour of a person occupying a particular social position" (Van Rossem & Vermande, 2004, p.396). Young people today have roles within society, within their homes and within cultural settings. A person's role within a group can be formal or informal. Formal roles may be designated by titles such as teacher or student, kaumātua or kuia. Informal roles are often less obvious but still powerful (Kassin et al., 2010).

The specific roles that young women have at tangi are of interest for this study. Whilst at tangi those in attendance are made up of different groups these include the bereaved family, the tangata whenua and the manuhiri. Within this setting these groups have specific roles and responsibilities to fulfil whilst on the marae. The manuhiri come to pay their respects and share the loss with the bereaved family. The tangata whenua prepare the marae for guests by making sure there is sufficient food. They prepare meals and work in the kitchen, dining room,

meeting house and grounds and they also form the welcome party at the marae (Harawira, 1997). Within these groups there are also different roles that exist such as kaumātua or kuia, kaikaranga and ringa wera (cook). The role that one has in this setting does define what responsibilities a person may have to fulfil while at the marae.

Traditionally within the marae setting there is usually a division of labour, where everyone is allocated various roles and responsibilities according to their age and gender (Sinclair, 1990). Barlow (1991) describes that it is the job of the men on his marae to butcher meat and chop firewood in preparation for visitors. Similarly the women on the marae are responsible for setting up the wharehau and preparing meals. Today young people are also allocated various roles and responsibilities dependent on what tasks need to be done and/or according to their interest; although many learn by observation (Ngata, 2005).

Powell (2004) suggests that during this stage of development young people need opportunities to face challenges or responsibilities and be able to experience becoming a completely developed individual. She also suggests that it is especially important for adolescent girls to have adequate opportunities to build their self-esteem or confidence. As young people are required to take on responsibilities whilst at tangi this may suggest that being involved at tangi may provide such an arena for this development.

What is of interest for this study is how these roles are learned today especially if many young Māori lack access to Māori communities and therefore cultural practices (Jahnke, 2002). Even for the women that are involved in tangihanga and are affiliated with their local marae it is of interest to explore what roles they hold today within the tangi, how they fulfil these roles and the impact that this involvement has on them.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion I have briefly reviewed literature pertaining to death and grief with regards to young people. I have also provided a description and review of the tangihanga process. Literature that discusses developmental aspects of adolescence has briefly been discussed with relevance to the area of interest which

is exploring how young Māori women interact and are socialised at tangi. While searching for available literature to base my research on I found it difficult to source information that would be relevant to this topic of interest.

While there is a large amount of literature available about adolescent development much of this research has been carried out overseas and is not specific to young people in New Zealand. There is a significant amount of research that has been carried out with youth in New Zealand but there still appears to be minimal information which directly addresses the issues relevant to rangatahi Māori, and even less from a rangatahi Māori perspective (Webster, Warren, Walsh-Tapiata & Kiriona, 2002). Also much of the research that is carried out here in New Zealand focuses on the problems facing youth and their anti-social behaviours' this depicts a very negative image of young people today. This study attempts to work from a 'rangatahi perspective' where the experiences and perspectives expressed by the participants remain the focus of the research.

There is a growing body of literature on tangihanga due to the research carried out by 'The Tangihanga research project' (Te Awakotuku, Nikora & Moeke-Maxwell). However there is limited to no research that examines the customary practices within tangi with regards to an adolescent perspective. This research endeavours to create new knowledge in relation to tangihanga and its contemporary meanings by exploring the experiences of young Māori women. August (2005) speaks to the importance of this type of research as she explains that "understanding identity and what makes us who we are, is vital to being able to tell our own stories or histories, instead of having them told for us" (p.122). This research will attempt to explore the tangihanga process, as to its unique way of approaching death. It will look at not only the internal experiences of the individual but the interactions that individuals may have with the social environment as well. This research aims to explore the roles that young Māori women have within the tangihanga setting. What responsibilities they may have at tangi? What obligations they feel they may have if any, and how they feel about those obligations?

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **METHOD**

This chapter will outline the chosen methodology employed for this project and provide a detailed account of how the research project was conducted. Qualitative techniques as well as a Māori centred approach were employed as they seemed appropriate for the aims of this study which were to explore the experiences of young women while attending tangihanga.

#### **Qualitative Research**

This study set out to gather qualitative data from face to face interviews with young Māori women. Carrying out face to face interviews gains the researcher access to a participant's responses as they are happening which can enable them to respond or react on what the other says or does. Social cues, such as voice, intonation and body language of the participant can also be added to the verbal answer of the participant (Opdenakker, 2006). Patton (2002) suggests that qualitative studies provide rich and descriptive accounts, and help to capture individual experience within the frame of subjective worldviews. This leads to comprehensive understandings and insights into a particular phenomenon. Within this mode of research, the researcher is seen to be the primary instrument for data collection and analysis and data are mediated through a human instrument, the researcher, rather than through an inanimate inventory, questionnaire, or computer (Merriam, 1998). One of the advantages of the qualitative approach is that theory is generated which is contextually sensitive, persuasive, and relevant (Henwood, 1992). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define five essential features of qualitative research:

- It is naturalistic as it has the actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument;
- It is descriptive with the data collected being in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers, including interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, and other sources;

- It is also concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products and how people negotiate meaning;
- It is inductive and the theory is grounded in the data and abstractions are built up as a picture is constructed as the parts are examined;
- It is concerned essentially with meaning, how different people make sense of their lives and capturing participants' perspectives accurately.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study as it allows for an interpretative approach, and this was seen to be appropriate for this study as it enables the researcher to explore and understand people's viewpoints, constructs and how they make sense of their experiences (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). This is exactly what the aim of this research is as the goal was to look at the experiences of young Māori women at tangihanga and share their viewpoints and gain an understanding of how they make sense of their experiences.

### **Kaupapa Māori Research**

For this research Kaupapa Māori techniques were employed as they were seen to best fit with both the content of the research and appropriate to use with the range of participants. Durie (1996) proposes that when carrying out research with Māori it is important to find methods that are appropriate to Māori, with the critical factors being Māori participation in the design of the project, the incorporation of Māori world views and a reflection of the diversity of Māori. Kaupapa Māori research aims to provide an avenue for research to be carried out in a safe and respectful manner for all those involved in the process. Smith (1999) describes the following concepts for conducting kaupapa Māori research as follows:

- Aroha ki te tangata (respect the people)
- Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face-to-face)
- Titiro, whakarongo...korero (look, listen...speak)
- Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)
- Kia tupato (be cautious)

- Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)
- Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge) (p.120)

Smith's method of research uses a collaborative approach that exemplifies power-sharing between the researcher and the participants (Kana & Tamatea, 2006). As my target group for this study was young Māori women it was important as a Māori researcher myself to obtain a clear understanding of how the suggested concepts would impact on how I carried out my research. When carrying out interviews it was important to do this face to face; being aware and cautious about how I approached topics and providing an environment that allowed the participants to share their stories. This also meant using language that was appropriate for this target group. This approach provided an environment where participant's thoughts, feelings and opinions are respected and valued. According to Smith (1998) the maximum benefits accrue to Māori when research about Māori is carried out by Māori and the process of researching Māori is undertaken in ways that align with Māori values (Smith, 1992). This research is intended to benefit Māori by helping to gain access to young women's experiences that can help to produce a clearer understanding of what the ritualistic practices and environment within the tangihanga setting mean for young Māori women today.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As part of the research process ethical approval was sought for this project before research was undertaken. The University of Waikato required that this study be reviewed and approved by the Psychology Research and Ethics Committee. All research that is undertaken that involved human participants has to comply with the University's "Ethical Conduct in research guidelines". Thus an ethics review for Human Research Application form was completed by the researcher. The researcher and supervisors were required to sign the forms and hand them into the Psychology Office. The application was then passed on for review by the ethics committee. After a short period of time confirmation was sent to the researcher advising that the application had been approved. An ethical review number was supplied by the ethics committee which is #10:01. This meant that research could now be commenced.

## **Pilot Study**

A directed study was undertaken prior to the commencement of this study. This involved interviewing two female participants between the ages of eighteen and twenty four who identified as Māori. Both participants were students at Waikato University. Data for this study was collected over the summer of 2010. The pilot study aimed to draw information from these young Māori women about their experiences whilst in attendance of tangihanga. This study provided the opportunity to trial the interview schedule and gain practical experience interviewing. It also provided a start off point and base for the larger study.

## **Research Method**

### **Participants**

I interviewed a total of seven participants; who were all young Māori women aged between the ages of eighteen and twenty four. The study had aimed to interview between eight and ten participants but only seven interviews were carried out initially. This was due to a difficulty in accessing participants who met the criteria and who were happy to take part in the study. There may be a number of explanations for this such as the sensitive nature of the topic which may have discouraged prospective participants from sharing their experiences. Another element that I had not anticipated was that being only a few years older than the participant target age group I assumed that it would be quite easy to locate participants. This was not the case as most of the people within my networks did not fit the age requirements, as either they were slightly too old or too young.

Upon analysis of the initial interviews it was decided that the seven interviews along with the two secondary follow up interviews provided enough information to meet the aims of this research. Participants were interviewed in Hamilton and Wellington. All participants self-identified as being of Māori descent. Although participants were only interviewed in two regions the participants shared genealogical links to a wider number of regions across the country. Five of the participants were students at a tertiary level while the other two participants worked from home as they both had young children. Some of the participants in the study requested to remain anonymous and therefore the researcher allocated a

pseudonym for these participants. Other participants interviewed did not mind being identified in this study and are referred to by their real names.

## **Recruitment Process**

### **Snowball sampling**

This research utilised snowball sampling to recruit participants. This method is based on the idea that many people in a small population will know someone else from the same group and may be prepared to give contact details to the researcher to potentially recruit more participants (Burdess, 2010). This method is also commonly used to locate and access people from specific populations. Often this method is used in cases where the researcher may anticipate difficulties in creating a representative sample (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Snowball sampling allows the researcher to identify the resources within a community and to select those people best suited for the needs of a project or process.

### **Procedure:**

The researcher used known contacts to recruit potential participants. This meant seeking out friends or family of the researcher that met the criteria of being female who identified as being Māori and who were between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age. There is a potential for problems when working with family so it was important for me to be aware of this issue prior to recruiting and interviewing participants. I overcame this potential problem by being upfront with the participants about their rights throughout the process of interview, also by being open to negotiation about the material that was discussed and by making the participants aware of my non-judgemental role as a researcher. Once I had identified potential participants they were invited to be a part of the research and were requested to suggest other participants who might be interested in being involved. Participants were made aware that the process would involve meeting with the researcher for around an hour to discuss face to face their experiences at tangihanga. Thus another criterion was needed in order to participate in the research; that the participant had to have been in attendance at a tangihanga or funeral at some point in order to provide relevant answers. Participants were



provided with an information pack that gave a description of the project prior to an interview, the information pack included:

- i) A profile of the researcher
- ii) An information sheet about the “Tangihanga: Through the eyes of young Māori Women” study
- iii) Consent forms for signing by the participant and any others who may play an active part in providing information to the study

### **Interview Schedule**

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed on discussion with the supervisor of this study. A semi-structured interview involves the use of a set of open-ended, guiding questions. This enables the interview to be open to changes as the interview progresses (Mutch, 2005). The interview schedule consisted of seven core questions. These questions were used as a guide for both the researcher and participant. Other areas of discussion arose during the interviews from the individual conversations, experiences and perspectives of the participant. The questions from the schedule were chosen to help draw out information relevant to the area of interest, which was focused on the experiences of the young women while at tangi. The questions were open ended to help stimulate conversation about tangihanga. The semi-structured interview schedule used for the interviews allowed the participants to share their experiences in their own words and in a way that they would feel most comfortable. The participants also had the opportunity to view the questions prior to the interview, as they were provided on the information sheet. This was to allow the participants to get an understanding of how the interview would run, what the specific area of interest was and gave the participant time to think about their responses. A pilot study was carried out with the first two interviews; this enabled the researcher to assess the suitability of the interview schedule and the approach towards the participants. After the pilot study, the interview schedule was not adjusted however after all of the initial interviews had been completed and a review of the material was undertaken a second interview schedule was created. This review involved looking across the interviews for common themes and measuring these against the aims for this study.

It seemed appropriate to create a secondary interview guide to gain access to the thoughts and perceptions of the young women that were specifically related to death and dying and relationships. These questions were decided upon under direction from the supervisor of this project. Due to timeframes and the availability of participants only two participants were chosen to re-interview. The two participants that were contacted to be re-interviewed were both students at The University of Waikato, both agreed to participate in the study and a second interview was carried out on campus at the University of Waikato.

The initial interviews were guided by the following discussion points:

- \* Your experiences at tangi - tell us about those tangi you have attended... (How many, where, of who, how long (1hr - 3 days)
- \* Of those tangi you have attended, what do you usually do? (Who with, where, how long, why) (Distinguish between 1hr-3 days)
- \* When you're at tangi, what do you usually talk with others about?  
(Who with, where, how long, why) (Distinguish between 1hr-3 days)
- \* Of the tangi you have attended, what usually happens around the tupapaku? (Who with, where, how long, why) (Distinguish between 1hr-3 days). What are usually doing at these times?
- \* What things about tangi do you most enjoy?
- \* What things about tangi do you least enjoy?
- \* What do tangi mean to you?
- \* Any general comments

The questions used in this interview schedule were aimed at exploring the experiences of the participants whilst at tangi. Asking them about the tangi that they had attended and who they attended with aimed to gain information about who the young women spent their time with whilst at tangi and what they did while they were there. Who they learnt from and how they learnt about customary practices was also of interest in this line of questioning. Asking the participants

about what they liked the most about being at tangi and what they least enjoyed aimed to get the participants to explore their attitudes towards this event.

The Second Interview schedule included the following discussion points:

- \* How do you view death?
- \* What are your beliefs about an afterlife? Where did you get these from?
- \* How do you think about relationships with cousins, aunts etc.?
- \* What part do these relationships play in your life? (At and away from tangi).
- \* What do tangi mean to young Māori women ...i.e.: would they be there if it wasn't for their parents?
- \* Where do they think you will be buried and why?
- \* If you had to bury their parents, would you know what to do?

The questions in this schedule attempted to gain access to the participant's thoughts and attitudes towards death. Some of the participants explored some of these concepts without being asked directly but others needed more prompting. This schedule of questions was also interested in exploring in more detail some of the family relationships and what they mean to young people today.

### **Interview Procedure**

The interviews were held at the participant's place of study, the residential address of the participant or an address of a friend. The interviews were conducted at a time of convenience to the participants. The researcher aimed to ensure that the participant was comfortable before going ahead with the interview.

The interview began with the researcher explaining her personal interest in the research project. I explained the interest that I have in working with young people and that being able to take part in a broader research project that explored an important cultural institution was a great opportunity for me. Continuing on, the researcher then discussed the participant's rights and the consent form. The emphasis was that participation was voluntary, informed consent was provided, and it was the right of the participant to withdraw from this research at any point.

The conversation also assured the participant of the confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process. Consent for the interviews to be digitally recorded was also discussed and subsequently all participants agreed to have their conversations recorded.

After the participant had given verbal consent to continue both parties signed the consent form and the participant was given a copy to take away with them. Before the formal interview began the participants were offered a further chance to ask questions or clarify any concerns. If or when participants became unsure of how to respond they were free to ask questions at any point throughout the interview process. At this time participants were also reminded that they could stop the interview or could choose not to answer any of the given questions. It was important to be mindful that due to the nature of the topic of tangihanga that participants could become upset or emotional throughout the interview and it was vital to give the participants control over the pace of the interview and the amount of content they wished to share.

Interview conversations were digitally recorded and the researcher took notes during the course of the conversation. This permitted the researcher to return to points of interest or questions unanswered without interrupting the flow of the interview. The interviews were estimated to take under an hour. The actual length was dependent upon the flow of conversation and information shared. Interviews ranged from 20 minutes through to one hour. At the conclusion of the interview each participant was thanked for their participation and asked if they had any further questions or concerns about the interview process.

### **Transcripts**

The interview material was transcribed in verbatim by the researcher; this included both the audio-recording of the interviews; and the notes taken during at the time of the interviews by the researcher. From the raw data, the interviewer developed a summary report including the main discussion points from the interview with direct quotes from the participants. The construction of the summary report attempted to reduce the large amounts of information transcribed from the interviews into a cohesive format that was ready for further analysis. The summary report was then returned to the participant for comment, amendment or

withdrawal of information. Participants were asked to return their summaries within a two week period. The participant was also required to sign a summary report deposit to show that they were happy with the content of the summary and that it was a true reflection of their interview responses. This also allowed their report to be used for this study. Further analysis was then carried out which included a search across interview summaries for common themes, derived meanings and outcomes.

### **Data Analysis**

The method of analysis used in this study was thematic analysis. This method of analysis involves identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes in the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). The themes are derived from recurring ideas, conversation, activities or key words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1988). On completion of transcription the data was collated into summary reports. The summary reports were organised and categorised into various themes that emerged from the interview. This involved reviewing and paraphrasing significant conversation covered during the interview and using verbatim quotes from the participant. This made for easier retrieval of information when examining and identifying commonalities between each interview during the analysis phase. Braun & Clark (2006) suggest six phases for conducting analysis which involve: Becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing a report. From this point the findings were generated and discussed with regards to their significance, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Summary**

This chapter has outlined the methodological process employed within this research project. The aim of the research was to explore young Māori women's experiences within the tangihanga setting. A qualitative approach was chosen for this project as it is participant focused, interactive and sensitive to subjective opinion. This method of generating data provided access to the young women's thoughts, ideas and memories expressed in their own words and not the researchers (Jahnke, 2002). Using qualitative methods to reflect upon the

subjective experiences of bereaved individuals will enrich the researchers understanding of participant's experiences (Buckle, Dwyer & Jackson, 2009).

Face to face interviews allowed a personal explanation of the research aims, the researcher's interest in the topic, and how the research aimed to benefit Māori. The interviews drew out subjective experience, knowledge and understandings of the young women interviewed. When conducting youth research Smith described that a 'safe space' needs to be provided where researchers can 'hear it like it is' (Smith et al., 2002). This methodology was seen to be culturally appropriate as it provided an opportunity for both participant and researcher to share knowledge and stimulate discussion through shared experiences.

The results for this study have been presented in the following chapter as both the findings and discussion section have been combined. The main themes that arose from the interviews will be discussed and verbatim responses that convey the participant's experiences, thoughts will be provided.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

This research set out to explore the experiences of young Māori women while at tangi. The purpose of this investigation was to assess the attitudes that young Māori women hold towards tangihanga, the meanings that they create and the learning that they experience through this process. The interviews allowed the participants to express their opinions, attitudes and understanding towards tangihanga. From the initial interviews summary reports were created, from these summaries further analysis was then undertaken to find main themes that were evident across the interviews and these themes are discussed below.

#### **Tangihanga**

The word tangihanga translated means crying, weeping or funeral. In general the tangihanga refers to the gathering of family and friends to farewell a loved one. This process usually occurs over a three to five day period, where family and friends gather together as soon as possible after the death of a loved one. For Māori, the tangi provides a way of fare-welling the dead and comforting those of the living (Dansey, 1995).

All participants were asked to express their opinions towards the tangihanga that they had attended. The participants shared fond memories and experiences of attending tangi as children and as young adults. For some of the participants attending tangi was a very normal experience and for others it was uncommon and very memorable. The amount of tangi that the participants had attended varied amongst the participants, as a couple of them had attended as little as two tangi and others had attended too many to count. The participant's thoughts, feelings and experiences at tangi are presented below from the participant's perspectives.

Kat shared her thoughts and experiences of being at the tangi of a close family member.

Well when I was little it was just really cool because all of us cousins got back together and you saw people that you never met before and we would always play bullrush and cool stuff like that, and you got to know

everyone and you realised your family is heaps bigger then you thought because I was pretty much brought up in a pākehā way by my mum and my dad so I didn't really have anything to do with the Māori side of the family. So we had like five cousins on my mums' side and then you go to a tangi and there's everybody who is your cousin and so it was real cool because everybody is just playing and stuff and then now when I went to nana's one last year it was real cool just catching up with everyone, all my cousins came over from Australia and stuff, it's good all helping out in the kitchen catching up

Keri had attended tangi since she was a young girl and explained that she could not put a number to the amount of tangi that she participated in, as attending tangi was a common practice for her and her family. She explained that while growing up her family would travel around the country to attend the tangi of relatives. This was important for them as there was an expectation that a representative from their whānau go to pay respects on behalf of the whole family, this expectation extended from close relatives to even distant relatives. This often meant travelling a long distance and being away from home for a period of time. Keri also explained that as a young girl she would often attend the tangi of those that she did not know, but she would go as companion for her nana and a support to her.

yeah well not all the time would I know the person but if my grandmother is going I would go with her and then if there is a group of people I would probably be the one who would get up and either start the songs after the speaker or I would just support with the singing, yeah I probably only really go to look after my nan, yeah that's probably it and if like it's on a poroporoaki night I would probably just go and sing

Tess explained that she would only attend tangi with her father and her grandparents and it was from them that she learnt about tikanga and protocols on the marae. She explained that she felt quite ignorant about the whole process and was unsure about what to wear or how to behave on the marae. Tess's grandmother helped to clarify this for her as she explained what was considered appropriate behaviour and some of the meanings behind the practices.



My sister and my brother came, with my Nan and my granddad yes always with them... the person that I'm talking about she was actually like my nana's brothers wife it was one of her relations, and her mum is Māori and that's our side of the family and... she is the one that like told us, because I was pretty ignorant to a lot of the stuff about it so she is the one who kind of prepped us

Rena attended tangi with her parents from a young age, she advised that she has had some close family members pass away. For her, attending tangihanga consisted of going through the formal proceedings, greeting the grieving family and then rushing for the kitchen to work alongside her family.

I stayed in the kitchen most of the time, as my mum she brought us up to and we had to. As soon as we go on to marae we go through the pōwhiri and then like after that we have to go straight into the kitchen, that was our role, and so ever since... well every time we go to a marae we always go into the kitchen after we do our little you know little session with everyone and then just go straight in there

Shay had also attended a number of tangi. She would always attend tangi with her mother. She explained that she hadn't attended the tangi of someone that was very close to her so attending tangi for her was about spending time with family and doing what she could to help the grieving family.

These experiences shared by the young women provide an understanding of how foundational the institution of tangihanga is for Māori. It also speaks to the universal nature of death. All the participants had attended tangi and some of them recounted experiences from a young age. Although some of the women had limited contact with Māori communities they all had attended tangi with their whānau, and this attendance had provided them with a form of access to Māori cultural traditions. Research has suggested that gaining access to Māori communities helps young people to form a positive ethnic identity. This is important as Webber (2012) found that a positive ethnic identity allowed young people to repel negative stereo-types and accommodate positive attributes.

Those participants that attended tangi more frequently were more familiar within the setting at tangi and were comfortable with both the formalities and the informalities of this occasion. These participants' experiences support the statement that the tangi and its associated rituals are an enculturated pattern that is learned through repeat engagements that begin in childhood (Jacobs, et al., 2011).

### **Tikanga & Protocols**

Tikanga is the set of beliefs associated with practices and procedures to be followed while conducting the affairs of a group or an individual (Mead, 2003). The questions around this topic provided the participants with the opportunity to share their knowledge and understanding of the specific tikanga around the marae and more specifically the tikanga involved with tangihanga. Ngata (2005) explains that this event is steeped with tapu and kawa and each hapū and/or iwi hold different customary practices following the death of a loved one, although there are threads of similarity that are found throughout Māoridom. The tikanga of the tangihanga describes the specific format and sequence of cultural processes and practices; which are widely understood and adhered to (Marsden, 1992; Mead, 2003; Walker, 1990).

Some of the major protocols within the tangihanga include: pōwhiri, karanga, hongī, waiata, whaikōrero and much more (Harawira, 1997). Many of the young women had been involved with some or all of these specific aspects whilst on the marae at tangihanga both as a member of the manuhiri and tangata whenua.

Rena recounted experiences of travelling to tangi and arriving late at night or in the early hours of the morning. She explained that she would be woken up and be expected to take part in the formal proceedings of pōwhiri no matter the hour. She explained that this was not something she always wanted to be involved with as she felt shy about meeting new people but as she put it, this often was not a choice for her to make. Her father made it clear that it was an expectation of her family to be actively involved in this particular part of the tangihanga.

when we get there we will make out like we're asleep in the van but we're not, and they are like get up where going in, and we don't want to and so we are like you go first, nah you go first...then you have to like sing songs

and dad always gets up and says a speech and then we all have to stand up and sing along in front of everybody and then I'd get butterflies because I hate standing up and singing in front of big crowds and I'd always have to be out front because dad's like stand in the front and then he's like you better sing loud or else I'll deal to you after the tangi and I'm like, oh ok

The tangihanga for many of the women was a place of learning, as it was where they learned about some of the important aspects of Māori culture. Many of the women explained that they learnt as they attended with their grandmothers, kuia and aunties. Once the participants had been exposed to the tikanga and knew what was expected of them they became more comfortable and confident with taking part. Shay describes her thoughts from her first encounter with tangihanga and the pōwhiri process.

“Interesting yeah because of the different things that happen, I didn't know that it happened before and yeah it's a new experience and so yeah, it was cool”

Keri had a lot of experience with tangi and has built up quite a wealth of cultural knowledge. She explained that she learned about appropriate behaviour at tangi through her grandmother and this education started from a very young age. Keri recalled learning about specific tikanga or cultural practices inherently by just being present at tangi with family. She explained that through repetition and assistance she learnt about what was expected of her and others. Keri explained that at times she would think the tikanga of the marae was strange or different to what she had been accustomed to, but she would use others to guide her in the correct protocol. She would also ask questions of her grandmother when she didn't know why they would do something, or why things were done in a specific way and why in other instances they may have been required to do things in a different way. Keri's grandmother would explain and teach Keri and her sister about what was appropriate behaviour. Keri's older family members such as older cousins or aunties were also valuable sources of information to her. She explained that over time she became accustomed to those necessary practices that are an integral part of both tangihanga and marae protocols.

When I was younger, I always used to go to my grandmother and ask why do you do that, why do you do that? And she'd tell me why, and she'd go 'so make sure you do that daddadada, that when your older you do this and you do that', so then you just kind of remember it when your older and you just make sure and then you just automatically start doing it, ah that's from like a manuhiri perspective, like why do they do the karanga, why do they do this, why do they do that, yeah and then I suppose being there and being told and experiencing it you just pick it up and then you just know what to do

Nina considered tikanga as the rules of how you behave on the marae. She explained that she was required to hongi when on a marae and that overall it was important to be respectful to others. This included her personal appearance, as being dressed appropriately was important to her and her parents; she explained for her it was similar to going to church in a way that she would not wear something that was offensive to others. She also learned that it was important to not leave the body alone as she recalled that one of her aunt's or other family members would stay with her papa's body at all times.

when you go on a marae you hongi and stuff and be respectful and you don't wear certain things like hats, you never wear hats and beanies, you don't have a hood over your head respectful clothes something like not church wear but something respectful and then when we had to like sit on the floor or on mattresses and the older ones sit on the chairs and if we were sitting down or laying down and if an uncle comes over we have to stand up you know and then when there was work to be done we had to get up and do it and stuff yeah

For Tess just discussing tikanga and her experiences of tangihanga demonstrated to her how little she really knew about Māori cultural practices. She explained that she grew up with very little knowledge of things Māori as her father did not seem too interested. The Māori cultural has only recently become more important to her as she has gotten older. She explained that for her attending tangi at times was a scary experience as she was unsure about what to do and did not feel comfortable enough to ask questions and did not want to appear ignorant. This made it difficult

for her to learn from her experiences, but she now endeavours to challenge herself to learn more.

I really, really want to and it just was never like my dad is Māori but we've never, it never was drummed into us when we were kids like we never ever really got to live like in a Māori worldview but I always wanted to and I don't know about jade and nick (brother and sister) but it's not like until I've gotten older and stuff and pretty much coming to university and seeing that like having the opportunity to actually kind of take on some roles that allow me to kind of get in touch with my Māori side, it has kind of opened my eyes up to even wanting more kind of thing and so that's why I'm doing mentoring and like a few other things but like it's just yeah and definitely in the next like, like sometime in the next five years it's my goal to do te reo Māori classes

Kat shared similar experiences of being unsure at tangi as a young girl.

I didn't know anything like, like I just walked straight in and everyone was like "no, no, no you've got to wait" and I was like no and then um apparently I was quite creepy like I kept looking at the body and kept going up and touching her, and stuff like that because I didn't know what it was because I think it was the first funeral I'd ever been to so yeah

The participants varied in their range of experience in this area as some had a wider range of experience within the marae setting and were very accustomed to cultural protocols while others were far less experienced. Yet all participants shared the things they enjoyed in regards to tikanga and the things they least enjoyed, they shared their understandings of how and why certain things were done in specific ways. This provides us with an understanding of how cultural knowledge may be imparted to younger generations today, but this sharing of knowledge was not experienced by all.

Many of the participants explained that often an older family member such as a grandmother would explain and teach them about cultural protocols, this appears to fit with traditional styles of teaching young people. A common strategy that was used for teaching young people within Māori society was for an elder to take

a young person under their care. This was referred to as Pukengatanga. The elder would teach the young person directly as a mentor and feed them knowledge. The student would be required to accompany the elder to hui and other special occasions. In this case the young person functioned as a link between generations that ensured the survival of critical knowledge (Caddie, 2010). The experiences of the young women appear to be a modern version of this traditional concept of teaching and learning.

These findings may also highlight a lack of understanding or a lack of education for some young women today. As mentioned in the literature this may be due to a lack of access to cultural environments. Although all the women identified as being Māori a number of them explained that they had limited experiences with Te Ao Māori. This impacted on how they engaged in cultural settings such as being on the marae and engaging in customary practices at tangi.

### **Cultural Learning**

As Kat had a limited amount of experience with tangi she noticed that she learned a lot while going to and being involved at tangi. In this instance Kat relayed how she learned about the tikanga that is involved with photos of the dead in the marae.

I didn't know about the photo's because it was her seventy fifth birthday the week before and I had taken heaps of photos and it ended up being one of the photos that I took and we had to cut Grand-dad and his sister out so it was just her because they were like no you can't have us in it because we're still alive yeah so that was new, yeah so I don't really go in assuming anything because I know I'm going to go in and learn stuff just by seeing, and then so we had to go and find all these photos of all these dead people lucky heaps of people had died and we had all those photos on the wall but yeah we had to crop all these photos and all that kind of stuff

For many of the young women learning more about their cultural heritage and taking part in customary practices was important. At times they found some things difficult but they appeared to appreciate the value in taking part and showing respect for the cultural aspects in the tangihanga. According to Durie (1994) Māori who identify as being 'culturally' Māori have an understanding of their

whakapapa and have knowledge of the Māori language and customs. In order for the participants to take part in cultural practices and feel confident to participate, they first needed to learn how to participate in the customary practices while at tangi. The participants shared that they learnt how to behave and what to do by observing what others did and also by being instructed by older family members.

Some of the participants struggled in some of the cultural settings. This was due to a lack of experience with customary practices. Specifically for two of the young women this may be explained by the fact that they both had Pākehā and Māori parents and so struggled with being in both worlds. For Kat she explained that she was raised in a predominantly ‘pākehā way’ with little interaction with things Māori. The tangi was one place where she felt that she could connect with her ‘Māori side’, she expressed the importance of this for her as she was able to reconnect with wider whānau networks and feel a part of a collective.

Tess similarly had a Pākehā mother and Māori father and explained that she was raised with little interaction with things Māori. She felt uncomfortable in some settings as she was unsure of what to do during certain protocols such as marae etiquette. She explained that for her this only deepened her desire to learn more about her heritage and get a better understanding of how to do things appropriately in a marae setting. Edge & Nikora (2010) discuss some of the issues that dual cultural families face in regards to tangi. They found that communication; compromise and continued engagement provided resolution to intercultural conflicts and this created new pathways to participation and understanding. This research is from the perspective of a Pākehā experiencing the tangihanga process thus it is of somewhat difference to the experiences of the two young women some similarities can still be drawn. As the two young women have had little experience with things Māori and expressed feelings of nervousness and being unsure when placed in cultural settings. Their experiences draw similarities to these findings as they too found that with persistence and seeking advice from older family members they were able to become more at ease on the marae and gain a better understanding of why things were done a certain way.

### **Interactions & conversations while at tangi...**

The participants interacted with a variety of people while at tangi including, kuia, family and friends, other teenagers and visitors to the marae. Depending on the situation the people they interacted with would often change, for instance if they were a part of the grieving family they would spend a lot of time with their immediate family. If they were tangata whenua on the marae then they would talk with the other workers on the marae. If they were attending tangi with family but were not close to the deceased then often the participants explained that they would have more time to socialise and spend time with the other young people on the marae.

Nina explained that she would stay close to the family members such as her parents or cousins initially at as this was what she was most comfortable with. However as time went on she would usually be introduced to extended whānau by her father or other family members and this meant that she would end up speaking to different people both older and younger family members as well.

I talk to the cousins and then you know Dad will say do you remember this person? This is so and so and I would just sit there and talk to them for a bit and they would say ‘oh yeah I remember you’ and I would just nod my head oh ok, and then like some of the aunties and uncles that I remember I would go and sit and talk with them for a while and go hang around my mum and dad like I always do and then if I was unsure about things I would go and ask dad you know what I was meant to be doing and then go and hang around with my mum or something

Tess also had similar experiences. As she had not spent a vast amount of time on the marae she would stick with the people that she felt safe to talk to. Tess was quite conscious of her lack of knowledge at marae and so often felt intimidated by those who knew more about the tangihanga process. This meant that she would stick to other groups of young people where she felt she could be herself and not feel bad about not always knowing what to do on the marae.

me and jade hung out with this whole group of Māori boys that live at Makatu like not far from the marae and they were all there and so we kind of like hung out with them and that was sweet that was just easy and sweet and no worries



Many of the participants shared that several of their conversational topics were based around reacquainting themselves with friends and family and finding out the happenings in the lives of extended family members. Cat explains this point more clearly by stating that her family enjoyed talking together and gossiping with each other.

We gossip and we talk about other members of the family, yeah you find out heaps and there is always massive fights, um one of my aunties' like never came down or anything but she was the oldest and so when, so she would always sit next to nana the whole time and so everyone that didn't really know her was like "Oh you know poor Carol, oh poor Carol her and nana were so close" and we're like no, no she's not but she, yeah she was like the star of the show and so everyone was bitching about her and um yeah lots of gossip, lots of gossip

Courtney also mentioned that she would use free time (when she wasn't working in the kitchen or helping out in some way) to talk with her cousins, friends and family. This would not always be about serious topics as she noted they would talk about music, personal interests and during this time they would gossip and spend time sharing memories.

Well sometimes we talk about like our music, like what kind of music that just came out and like if we've got that song and if we've learnt that dance yet to a song, or if we've heard stuff about a celebrity like just gossiping and or we'll talk about like stuff that is happening in the family like scandals maybe or stuff we heard ... and then like sometimes we'll just reminisce of like all the old days of when we hung out because like everyone is grown up and like they've grown apart so we just like talk about that yeah

Rena also mentioned that for her it was enjoyable talking to the older family members. Those older family members would tell her stories about when she was younger and about other family members, she enjoyed this as she would not otherwise have the opportunity to talk with and learn about her younger years and the experiences of others.

I would talk to the aunties, you know just the basics, ask people who they are and how they are related questions and who are your kids and how old are they? Just so you knew who they were and then they would start to say well I remember you when you were a little kid you used to dance on the tables when you were a little kid when there were parties and stuff and I am just like oh shame how embarrassing, you know me by that ok, but yeah it's good you know to have a good laugh with people who knew you when you were a little baby and stuff and it's quite cool to listen to them to tell you what you were like when you were little

Keri said that her actions or involvement within the tangi were dependent on a number of things such as; who had died, how well she knew them and what other things she may have on in her life at the time. Keri mentioned that at times attending a tangi could be a simple day visit; in that instance she would go through the pōwhiri process, see the tūpāpaku and visit with the family and pay her respects. In other cases if the person that had died was a family member or someone of importance to her then she may stay for the duration of the tangi.

Oh it depends on when you go like if it's like a normal three day tangi you might stay for two, two days you might go one day and then stay overnight and then go back after the tangi the following day or something or if it's a close family member you might stay for the duration from the time you get there but then it just depends on like when they are coming, like say the person died in Wellington and you still have to wait for them to get to the marae, which was up the east coast so you'd probably wait for them to get there and end up being the tangata whenua you know welcoming the body on or you could go and be the manuhiri going on with the body, and if it's about three days you'll stay for three or four days and then after that you'll just stay and clean up if it is like close whānau

We can see from the shared experiences of the young women, that the tangihanga is a social environment. Whilst they were there the young women interacted with family, friends and other visitors and the local people of the marae. At times the young women found it difficult in social situations; but the women also saw the value in taking time to meet new people or share conversations with relatives both

old and young. We can see that although the young women were required to fill certain roles such as; cleaning, listening to older family members, assisting with cooking duties etc., there was still time for socialising, for relaxing, and talking with family and friends.

### **Least enjoyable aspects of tangihanga**

The participants were asked to share the things they least enjoyed about tangi. This included a number of things for many of the participants there were parts of the customary practices that they were not always comfortable with but for most this was not the thing that they least enjoyed about tangi, it was just something that they struggled with personally. For example Courtney explained that she would feel apprehensive when it came time to harirū with older people after the pōwhiri at the marae.

It is just me, and I always get really scared when you have to go around and kiss all the old people at the front I hate doing that and sometimes it is like is that a girl or is that a guy, you cannot tell

A number of the participants alluded to groups of people who would attend tangi for more than just paying their respects. From the perspective of the participants there were a number of people who appeared to just turn up to tangi for the free food. Kat shared her experiences with this at her grandmother's funeral.

yeah, like if it was my mum or dad's tangi and all these people came I'd be like oh you didn't know her, why are you here kind of thing because that happened at my nana's tangi one of my uncles one of the dick ones he has like his ex-wife or something is Samoan and she has all these illegitimate kids and grand-kids and stuff and they all came and none of them knew her and we were all like what are you doing here, he didn't even know who all these kids were but they just came anyway for a feed and as soon as they had a feed they left and I wouldn't want people to think that I would be like that just turning up to a funeral

For Kat attending the funeral of a person she did not know was unacceptable and something that she considered as being inappropriate. She explained that she would feel like an imposter and would feel like everyone would be looking at her.

Kat explained that for her a tangihanga was a personal experience and that if it was one of her parents' tangi she would not like there to be strangers present. Kat viewed tangi as a place for those that are grieving and as an opportunity to spend time together to share memories and support each other.

Rena also mentioned that there was a problem at her marae where people would take food home after the hakari or during the tangi before it had been allocated out. She explained that within her marae it was common practice for the group of workers to receive a koha of food to take home and share with their own whanau as a form of payment for their services. One of the negative aspects of the tangi experience for her was that people would steal or help themselves before this had occurred. This portrayed how some people would take advantage of the circumstances or misfortunes of others. Rena explained that she felt it was unfair for both the family and the workers who had spent their time working in the kitchen.

at the end of tangi like with my mums tangi there was a lot of food left over and you divide it up and dish it out to the family that helped out but you always get the ones who haven't been in the kitchen or who haven't helped and they just go and take it without anybody knowing and that's what I don't like about it sometimes and it happens quite a lot, like they are not in the kitchen or their kids are not in the kitchen but when it comes to at the end and they are dishing out all of the food to everybody you know we are like o where is all this food gone and someone's just taken it home without anybody noticing and that is rude, yeah there are a few of them like one dude chucked a whole load of meat into his car and that's a dumb thing about it, and the last couple of tangis that I went to that's what happened and it's really dumb. I think it's sad and can ruin it because the people in the kitchen have worked their butts off and then they deserve to get something to take with them even if it's a loaf of bread

### **Views on Death**

Not all the participants were asked specifically to express their views on death and dying, however this was a topic that naturally came about from the line of questioning. The participants generated discussions that provided meaningful

insight into their views on death and dying. A number of them explained that they held religious beliefs about dying; these viewpoints will be discussed in further detail in a later section. Those responses that provided information of a point of view on death and dying that were outside of that area are provided below.

Keri expressed her ideas about death explaining that she felt it was a natural progression in life. She explained that she also did not think of it as something scary, but she acknowledged that it was a sad time for those that were close to the deceased.

I don't see death as being something scary I think it's because when I was little we were always going to tangi and stuff so it wasn't anything new like as an adult or as a teenager when someone died it wasn't that it was a scary thing or even going to a marae I didn't think it was scary, seeing you know a body in a coffin wasn't scary, some look funny but you know it's not scary but I just think it's a natural progression of life, but that's probably because well not that I think about death but I expect it eventually not just for me but for others and family because of being around it and having close family members die so it's almost normal well you know not normal well yeah it is normal in my life it is normal I suppose

Attending the tangi of those who had suffered from a previous illness was somehow less upsetting to Nina as she recalled her papa's tangi as more of celebration then a time for grieving. He had been unwell for some time and they saw this as an end to his pain. In her opinion the death of young friends or children were more tragic and harder to deal with.

yeah because it's like harder for a kid's funeral because it's like you think of your own kids and then you think of their loss and then you think they haven't lived a life where as an older person they have like lived a life, sort of thing they've achieved something

Turner (2006) advises that talking with young people about death is important as it can assist in helping them to understand the concept of death. Discussions about death can also significantly reduce fears, anxiety and other emotional or

behavioural responses associated with mourning the death of a loved one. It is evident that due to the exposure that these women have received during the tangihanga process that they do not view death as a scary or taboo subject. The participants were able to discuss their views comfortably on death in a frank and open manner.

### **Whānaungatanga/ Family Relationships**

Funerals are often a time for family to spend together to mourn the loss of loved ones, this is no different for Māori during tangi. Current literature advocates the importance of family support as a peer support during adolescence. All of the participants recounted experiences that involved spending time with family, reuniting, mourning and working together. The close living quarters and time set aside from normal everyday activities often allowed for relationships to be strengthened and renewed. Keri explained that for her tangi are often a family reunion of sorts as she was able to reunite with friends and family that she may have not seen for some time.

I suppose tangi are sort of like mini reunions it's not a good place to do it but so you just talk with everyone, like some of the kaumātua if you haven't seen for ages and they want to know what you're up to or they want to talk and know how's your whānau how is your nan, what's everyone doing? ... it's the most enjoyable part well just being with your family really like when all your whānau come back from overseas or you haven't seen them because they live down south or they live in other parts of the country and everyone comes back it's just good to be with everyone being reunited, yeah just kicking back and working together, it's a sad occasion but it's always really good to see all the whānau because that's usually the only time that you get to see them

Other participants recounted similar experiences as Keri, stating that spending time with family was one of the most important aspects of tangihanga. This included not only their immediate family but also their extended family. Nina described the tangi as a time to strengthen her family relationships. She would work together with her family and hang out with her cousins. However at times it could be confusing as she could not always recall certain family members that

would be introduced to her by her father: at these times Nina became uncomfortable or shy and would rely on her parents especially her mother. Nina also explained that her relationship with her nana was fundamentally important as she would help to guide and teach her about what was expected and what was right and wrong when on the marae. For Nina and other participants the tangihanga was a place of sharing and learning. Nina recalled learning more about her whakapapa by sitting and listening to the older people talk, from them she gained a clearer understanding of her place within her whānau, hapū and iwi.

I remember seeing a tangi too before papa's at that marae and being there but I can't remember the person but I think we just sat back and watched what everyone else did and we basically did it and then every time there was talks and all that we would go and sit in and listen in and it was just learning and listening and finding out about you know the family and the history and everything because that's where they said that we would learn and then we would make time with our cousins later and we used to stay up all night and play cards and talk and hangout and then yeah I thought it was fun, yeah it was like a family bond sort of like getting to know a bit of your background and like the Māori side and the traditions

Courtney also emphasised that tangihanga was a time to spend with her family this included both her immediate and her large extended family. For her the tangi was a social event that provided her with the opportunity to talk and spend time with other young people (cousins, friends) and discuss what is happening in each other's lives.

Usually like all the young people like around my age we are kind of all the same we leave all our aunt's to go up the front and we just kind of hang at the back... we definitely stay there just sit at the back and wait till it's time to go, yeah we just talk about like stuff young people do, more like our social life. Yeah not really the tangi, like partying, drinking or who's hooking up with whom

Kat's description of whānau is having access to people that are there to support and assist her whenever they are needed. For her in particular her aunties were an avenue of support as she explained that she was planning on visiting an aunt yet

she had not given her aunt any notice of the intended visit but she was assured that her visit would be met a very warm reception. She also described that her attitudes and experiences were not always equal among family members. Kat felt like she got along better with some family members and not so well when dealing with others, therefore she would spend more of her time with those family members that she felt most comfortable with and could readily converse with. She explained that her father had a large family that consisted of nine brothers and sisters and that she really only got along with three of her aunties and uncles. The whānau that she did get along with were people that she could spend time with, and who made an effort to stay connected with what was going on in her life as well as those whom she felt she could talk most easily with. These whānau members were also people that Kat looked up to and respected. They are people that her family go to in times of need such as a tangi. Kat explained that these members of her whānau provide an avenue of advice and support that is free of judgement.

yeah some of my aunties I spend heaps of time with and we catch up like all the time and the other ones I don't see for like five years and I don't really care about them, like I know they are there and they are my aunties and when we catch up it's cool but there is more emphasis on the one's that I really like and want to hang out with, if that makes sense... ah well we hang out and we catch up it's always like funny stories and talking about my cousins and stuff and like they actually know how to Facebook and catch up with people and send photos and drink and eat... Yeah and mutual interest as well because you can actually have intellectual conversations kind of, and talk about things and you know that they won't judge you and they have like heaps of personal experience to kind of give you advice

Some of the questions that the participants were asked did not specifically discuss how tangihanga may have impacted on their family dynamic or their relationships with others but some interesting points about this arose during the interviews. Rena explained that for her tangi was a time to reunite with friends and family, but she considered herself to be shy therefore she would rarely venture out and talk to other visitors while at the marae. This was not uncommon



among the other young women for many of them they found they often preferred to stick with family that she was more acquainted and familiar with.

These close family connections are very important for all young people and research carried out with young Māori ascertaining protective and risk factors for youth suicide clearly found that having a strong connection with family was a major protective factor for Māori youth (Clark et al., 2011). A weaker sense of family belonging has been associated with increased risk taking behaviours' while a supportive relationship and a sense of family belonging has been demonstrated as a protective asset for the health and well-being of young people (Brooks, Magnusson, Spencer & Morgan, 2012).

Another aspect with regards to family is that of being around older family members which allowed the participants to learn more about their extended whānau and about their whakapapa. This allowed the women to make connections with their whānau, hearing stories about the area they were in or about their parents growing up helped them to feel closer to their whānau. Keri explained that she learnt more from talking with and listening to older aunties or the kuia and kaumatua at tangi.

yeah you learn about the history of the area they grew in, where you're from, yeah the history of your family like sometimes I don't know who all these people are that my grand-mother is talking about but then they get up and start talking and I'm like oh I know who you are and I sort of know how that story goes but now I'm hearing another side of it yeah it's really cool, yeah and like I might not know all the oldies but I know their grand-kids and then the grand-kids will get up and say something and then I'm like "oh your blahblah blah you're the person who my grandmother was talking about" sort of thing

### **Expectations and Obligations**

A number of the participants brought up issues around the expectations and obligations whilst at tangi. This included not only for themselves but also the obligations that others in different roles hold within the tangi setting. Keri

provides an example of this. She explains that for her at times whilst growing up she attended a lot of tangi ...

well we weren't expected or rather we didn't have to go there and like sing and stuff but we were kind of expected to be there, even if you didn't know the person sometimes because it was a small community everyone had some affiliation somehow or they had some connection with the school so like we would just go there and it could be in the middle of the week and we'd still have to be there at one in the morning and then still have school the next day... yeah it just depends like for some it's a burden like there in that instance it can be to the point of being a hoha but if you're not like on the tangata whenua side it's a way of just paying your respects and even if you're not you don't even know the tūpāpaku it's to pay your respects to the family and show your support for the family

During Keri's schooling years she attended a Kura Kaupapa Maori, this kura was heavily involved with the local marae. Therefore with the involvement of her kura and heavy involvement of her family with community, there was a requirement that Keri be actively occupied in work during all tangi at her marae. This would often lead into long hours spent at the marae with no thought to how this would impact on her. At times this was detrimental to her schooling. As she reflected back she recognised that this was not always a good thing for her but it was a clear expectation from the school that she attended as well as her family.

Many of the women were expected to be actively involved within the marae in regards to both participating in customary rituals and working as hosts. While this was an expectation not all of the women enjoyed this aspect of tangihanga some of the participants explained that they didn't want to work in the kitchen or help out but they did so because it was an expectation from their parents and other family members. Again, some of the women expressed discomfort in taking part in some of the processes of the marae such as; kissing the body of the deceased or being required to stand up and sing in front of groups. Despite the women's reluctance in participating in these aspects of tangi they all advised that they still met these requirements to some degree because of the expectations that were

placed on them, both internally from themselves not wanting to be different and externally via their family members.

The participants also discussed the obligations that are placed on the grieving family during the tangihanga; such as the financial obligations of accommodating for large amounts of people. Rena also mentioned family obligations and how at her mother's tangi she spoke of the responsibility of hosting and working, she found that during the tangi of her mother she didn't have the time to grieve as she worked hard in the kitchen. She personally also preferred to grieve at home after the tangihanga this may have been due to the obligations that she felt of taking care of others.

I had to keep myself busy so I would not do that because it would just bring me down and I did not want that at the marae, so basically with my family we all didn't get time to grieve because we were in there doing our thing and that was it, yeah that's just me like if I am grieving I like to be busy so then I can get my head off it and then like later on like when everyone is gone and I go home and I can relax and I can just grieve then when it's nice and quiet and heaps of people aren't watching you, yes it gave me something to do so that I could grieve later because I didn't want to think about things and get really down, and I had my son with me to think about

Nina explained that her parents had brought her up with strict cultural and moral values. These included being respectful to her elders, behaving appropriately and working in the kitchen or wherever she may be needed whilst on the marae. For Nina and her siblings this meant that while attending tangi they would be required to help out in the kitchen, to make sure that the elderly or kaumatua were being taken care of and being available when cleaning was necessary. Nina recalls that this was very important to her father and that it was a clear expectation for her. Even before arriving at a tangi her parents would go over what they expected of their children this included good behaviour and helping out. For her papa's tangi this meant that she was to make sure her nana was well looked after and that she would pitch in and do her part in the kitchen before and after the meals.

Dad's raised us with you know, the older people get fed and like nan, cause that was papa's wife so she gets looked after before anyone of us eat and stuff and then there was a grown ups' table and then our younger group table and then after that, after we've eaten we all have to help out in the kitchen and do the dishes and everything and then we just went off and hung out with our cousins and caught up with everyone that we have not seen like in years

Mead (2003) provides an explanation of the obligations that are placed on not only the family of the deceased but also on all visitors and whānau that attend the marae:

Once at the marae entrance visitors follow a set of protocols and procedures. No matter what the weather or the demands of the workplace, there are obligations to meet. The death of a relative immediately places obligations upon many people. An important obligation is to gather around the bereaved family, lend support and be part of the work force. (p.133)

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

There were also a number of responsibilities that young women held during tangihanga, these ranged from singing waiata, cleaning in the kitchen and looking after younger cousins, looking after the elderly and much more. This differed slightly from the expectations that the women discussed as it appeared that for the young women the roles and responsibilities were things that they actively took on. Harawira (1997) explains that "teenagers on the marae are expected to help out the adults. They can clear and set tables, serve meals, pour tea and coffee, wash and dry dishes and help the ringa wera (the cooks) prepare food" (p.7). These were all tasks that the young women interviewed were required to carry out during their stay on the marae.

The young women had mixed responses to these set of responsibilities. Some of the women preferred to work and to be involved directly with the tangi, while others would shy away from this and do what they could to avoid tasks. Most of the participants explained that it was usually a dominant female figure such as an aunt, mother, grandmother within their family who they received direction and

instruction from. This person often modelled appropriate behaviour and often acted as a guide with which to negotiate the tangihanga and marae experience.

Although there was a mixed response about working on the marae at times overall the involvement and roles that the participants held whilst at tangi allowed them to feel a part of the inner workings on the marae. Rena explained that being in the kitchen provided her with a break from the grieving process, as she preferred to be busy and work than deal with the grief of losing someone. For her being in the kitchen gave her purpose and fulfilment as a member of the working team.

my mum she brought us up and we had to as soon as we go on to marae we go and get pōwhiri and then like after that we have to go straight into the kitchen, that was our role, and so ever since we're, well every time we go to a mare we always go into the kitchen after we do our little you know little session with everyone and then just go straight in there

Te Rangi Hiroa (1950) explains that the tangata whenua play host to those visiting the marae for tangi; taking on numerous roles to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Keri explained that her role within the marae was different depending on whether she was the tangata whenua or manuhiri. If she was attending a tangi at her own marae then her responsibilities were clear; she would cook, clean, find work in the kitchen or provide assistance to the kuia at the marae. She explained that this was very much engrained within her from a young age and that now when she attended tangi she was comfortable with just going out and helping wherever she found a need. If however she was manuhiri she would be required to first go through the powhiri process and express her condolences to the bereaved family. If she was a visitor to the marae and the person was not a close relative then Keri may only attend part of the tangihanga. She explained that the length of time spent at tangi depended upon how the person was connected to her either personally or through her extended whānau.

Doing dishes, setting up tables doing kai, cleaning toilets and making sure the grounds are clean, cleaning the wharenuī, I suppose we sort of had like a roster but really it's just if it needs to be done you just get in there and do it

The roles that the young women took on whilst in this setting acted as a rite of passage. They help move the young person from the childhood status to that of a transitioning adult. Caddie (2010) states that, “cultural rights and responsibilities are core rites of passage and for Māori include things like taking on new roles on the marae such as whaikorero, karanga, and responsibility for hosting others” (p.69). Some of the young women were actively involved in the inner-workings of the marae, while others were less involved and did not take on much responsibility whilst in this setting. Ritchie (1979) explains that it is up to the individual to assume the new status. Unlike western societies, where adult status is given or assigned by adult recognition, it has always been true of Polynesian societies that the transition is made by the decision and the actions of the individual, when he or she indicates. This appears to be accurate for the young women interviewed; they took on roles and areas of responsibility when or if they were ready. Some of them shied away from responsibility while others embraced opportunities to work and be involved. One explanation for this may be that the young women who were more familiar in the tangi setting easily moved into roles whilst there, the young women who had less experience at tangi tended to stay with peers and did not take on more areas of responsibility.

### **Tupapaku/ Experiences around the body**

This research aimed to explore young women’s experiences at tangi, thus it was important to ask how they engaged with the body, if they did, how and what were their thoughts about this. Amongst Māori it is a common held belief that the spirit of the deceased person resides with the body until after the burial, in this regard the grieving family use this time to share their experiences and express their feelings to their loved one that has died. Thus close family members remain close to the body and keep watch over it until the time has come to put their loved one to rest. Edwards et al., (2009) describes that at tangihanga the deceased lies in state with the coffin open and is the subject of direct greeting, affection and sometimes challenges and is always accompanied by family members. Many of the participants shared the interactions that they had with the tūpāpaku directly. Whilst at tangi the participants shared their observations that the body of the deceased was always surrounded by family members and often they themselves had been a part of the grieving family situated closely around the tūpāpaku.

Nina explained that as a younger person she didn't always enjoy kissing people that she did not know and she also would not like touching the deceased person. She recalled mourners coming in and wailing over the body, this was initially confusing and distasteful as she would watch them weep over the body and snot and tears would be expressed. This put her off touching or kissing the body after she saw this but she said that later she would feel compassion and consider how much those visitors must feel the loss of the person. She was not forced to engage or touch the tūpāpaku but explained that her feelings changed about this over time as people passed that meant a lot to her she found she was able to interact and kiss or touch the tūpāpaku.

Yeah it was ok like mum and dad used to take us over to them and you know they would go and give them a kiss and then I'd be like no I can't do it and then I would like try and touch and then I was like no I can't and then I think yeah it was like touch once and I used to try and work up the courage to actually touch them or kiss them but then I thought nah I don't want to do it and then mum and dad used to say that's fine you don't have to

Courtney also had trouble interacting directly with the tūpāpaku. She explained that she had observed how others interacted with the deceased but as no one close to her had passed she prefers not to interact in the same way:

Everyone goes up and kisses it, yeah and says their goodbyes yeah a lot of people like they sleep around the body yeah the grieving family usually or close family yeah or people who have travelled sleep in there... I've never had like anyone real close to me that's been like that in the marae all my grandparents that have passed away have been like my white side so we've always had them round at home yeah, no I like to like go and say good bye but not like touch it and sleep next to it and all that kind of stuff

Tess also explained her on the process she advised that as far as she knew the body stayed on the marae for what seemed like a long time and people would spend time with the body mourning after that there would be a service and then a burial.

Well it stays on the marae for like ages and heaps of people just go up and cry and stuff and hang around and say prayers and stuff, then go to the cemetery and get buried but I don't know how many days, like does it depend , yeah these are things that I really should know I need to know

Courtney also shared her understanding of what happens with and around the tupapaku whilst on the marae:

There is like usually always like flowers around them and cushions where people can sit down and chairs and when we sleep there is always like the family or the people who knew the deceased the most around in that area and there is always someone watching the body, the body is not allowed to be left alone...I think I heard like that the spirit will like go away or something or the body or evil spirits will come to the body, it's like a spiritual thing yeah

Rena also had trouble with the aspect of touching or greeting the tūpāpaku as a younger person but mentioned that her feelings changed with the passing of her mother.

I don't know I've just got a thing with them like I feel like they are going to wake up and "rraahh" and so I'm like dad do I have to kiss them and he's like yes you do, but yeah so in the end I end up doing it but so I just like close my eyes and do it and then get up and walk away like really fast like where I'm going to trip over people because I just want to get away, like that was with mum as well a little bit because I couldn't really, well I was quite sad but I was like there most of the time but I would put my hand on her not really kiss her and stuff so yeah I can do the hand buzz but just not the kissing and that coz yeah being forced is just like you get a bit oohh

Keri explained that her interactions with the tūpāpaku depended on who had passed whether they were someone that was close to her and also whether she was attending the tangi as a visitor or as a local.

oh so like if your manuhiri and then you go and do Harirū and stuff and you go into the area where the tupapaku is you know you say hello to



everyone that is there and depending on your relationship with the person that has passed away some people will like go up and say their good-byes then or like you know they can go up and kiss the tupapaku or you know just have their own little moment but it just depends on the individual at the time ...well it really depends on how kind of how busy the tangi is if you're a group that is on and then it's your turn to go and harirū if there is another group waiting to go on you try to like hurry up and get out and you know do all your harirū so you can go and have a cup of tea or something to whakanoa and then the other group comes in and if they are still busy and you're not staying for the night or you don't have time to stay that's kind of your only time to pay your respects so yeah so if you are the manuhiri you kind of want to do it straight away just in case you don't get the chance later or if you can't make it back for the tangi, so yeah usually when you go and harirū that's your only time to be with the tupapaku and it could only be for a couple of seconds because if you're not at the end of the line your kind of getting rushed along, unless you really really want to just sit down and whatever, If it's not really someone that I'm close to personally usually the only interaction would be in the morning or at night time because that is when service is so you have service at seven in the morning and then you have service again at seven at night and that would probably be the only time

From the responses about the interactions that were made with the tupapaku it appears that the participants were divided. A number of the participants struggled with traditional aspects of kissing and touching the tupapaku especially the participants who had only attended a small amount of tangi. Those participants who were more comfortable and familiar within the marae setting explained that they were accustomed to this practice and had no problem with this. Again those participants who had dealt with the loss of a significant family member tended to feel differently about the close contact with the tupapaku even if they had originally felt scared or apprehensive about the close contact previously. Most of the participants had an understanding of why things were done a certain way with regards to the body referring to such things as the family being close to the body and not leaving it alone.

## **Beliefs about afterlife**

Although, not all the participants were given this question to discuss directly many of the participants shared their ideas indirectly about the existence of an afterlife. Often when a loved one has passed there is mention of a person going to a 'better place' or a mention that they have moved on. This alludes to a belief in an afterlife of some sought. Some of the participants alluded to this fact while others were open about their religious or cultural belief in an afterlife.

Traditionally Māori believed that upon death the spirit travels to Te Rerenga Wairua, the leaping place of spirits at the tip of the North Island to be reunited with their ancestors.

When asked to share her opinions on an afterlife Kat explained that although she was not religious she did have a belief that people do go to a place where they can be with other loved ones who have passed away. She explained that she thinks this idea may have come from her mother but was not sure. She described that she believes that the dead are still here but the living can't see them. When describing this Kat was somewhat apprehensive as she stated that she hoped her family who are dead are not watching her at all times.

I'm not religious I believe or I think that when you die you go to somewhere and just like catch up with everyone that's died as well and then you just come back when you're ready... I don't know, I just think that's just how it goes and that they are still here and that we just can't see them and then I get real freaked out like, are you watching me and I hope you're not watching me when I'm pissed

Keri explained that she believed in an afterlife, she said that this stemmed from both her Christian and cultural beliefs. Keri's grandparents began practising religion while Keri was a young child and this influenced the whole of her family, she recalls holding church services at home from a young age and states that some of those beliefs have stayed with her. Keri explained that she believed in a heaven and hell and that where a person ended up was dependent on the individual's personal relationship with God, this decided where they would end up.

yeah so my mum raised us yeah and we went to church and like the pastors used to come to our house and we used to have church at our house and we grew up and were taught that there was heaven and hell and that when you died depending on your relationship with god you either went to heaven or hell

Nina also held Christian beliefs towards the existence of an afterlife and she explained that this stemmed from her parents and family's involvement with church from a young age. She explained that she believed that family members and loved ones would go to a better place.

yeah and then with Papa we saw the state of him before he died because he died of cancer It was in a way a relief sort of and then like because he wasn't in pain anymore you know he was suffering and he'd lost so much weight that he was nearly unrecognizable, and so it was sad that he was gone but it was, at least he's happy now and we were happy sort of thing but you know we would miss him

There is often a common occurrence that Māori traditions and cultural beliefs mingle closely with Christian ideologies (Salmond, 1976). Common Christian beliefs claim that the spirit of the deceased returns to heaven after death to be reunited with family and friends. Māori believe that the spirit of the deceased remains hovering over the body it has left for the duration of the tangi until the time of burial. Then the spirit travels to a place to reside amongst other family who have gone before them.

### **Tangihanga in comparison to other funerals**

This was an interesting aspect that surfaced during a couple of the interviews. Although the participants were not asked directly about the differences between a tangi and other funeral services a number of the participants shared their thoughts on how they felt the tangi differed to the funerals of non-Māori that they had attended.

Kat explained that she saw a distinct difference between tangihanga and Pākehā funerals. For her she stated that she wanted something in-between when she died.

She explained how normal funerals require the dead to be taken to a funeral home where they are left until the service.

I was talking to someone the other day and one of her friends died and they went down to go see her and they went to her house because she automatically assumed she would be in the house. The sister goes no she's at the funeral home, and she's like what's she doing there? go get her, and she said 'no, this is how we do it, she is going to go stay there until the funeral' and I was like 'fuck that's cold man' but that is what happened with nana they wanted her in the funeral home and we just went in and visited her but it seems funny to me because you wouldn't, even though you're dead I still feel like until their buried or cremated that you still have to look after them like you still have to be around them and stuff

Kat struggled to understand the concept of being away from the deceased person and felt that it was more traumatic for those who kept the deceased at a funeral home. She felt that the tangihanga process allowed her to farewell the deceased and provided the opportunity to mourn together with family and friends in a close knit environment.

when nana passed away we kind of had time to say good-bye and I think that is why because I want everyone around me as well because if you see the body for a few days when finally you know you finally get buried or cremated it's not as difficult where as if you are in the funeral home no one ever sees you and then when you have to go and pick up the body and take it in the hearse and stuff that's quite almost as bad as when they first die

This is raised in the literature briefly by Dansey (1995) who describes that Māori and Pākehā approach death in different ways. For Māori, "the dead are to be cared for, cherished, mourned, spoken to, honoured in a way which others might consider to be over-emotional and over-demonstrative" (p.108). This is not to suggest that Pākehā do not cherish their dead but rather it points out that they have different practices around death. The young women in the study found the lack of interaction or access to the deceased as very foreign and unnerving as it was not what they were accustomed to.

## **Meaning of tangihanga**

The participants were all asked to reflect on their experiences at tangi they had attended and then summarise what they thought tangihanga meant to them personally, this is what they shared.

Kat expressed that to her it was a good way to say good-bye to a loved one.

I think saying good bye in a nicer way, like it's real personal and everyone saying good-bye at once, whereas other funerals that I've been to it's quite individual you deal with your grief kind of on your own and then you say good-bye and that's it but with tangi because it's over such a long period of time you get used to the idea so when you come away it's just a nice good-bye like see you later not I'll never see you again

When Tess was asked what tangihanga meant to her she expressed that it was a time to celebrate a person's life. Although, she thought that this depended on the person's age or stage of life they were in. If the person who died was an older person than to her their tangi was a celebration of the life they had lived but if the tangi was for a younger person she saw this as more of a tragedy. Overall she thought that tangi was a time to spend with family and for her it was a time to learn more about her cultural heritage.

In terms of like the actual death of someone it's the celebration of their life you know, yeah I think it's a celebration of their life depending on what the circumstances of their death were like um depending on the person as well I mean if it is someone that is old and they have had a good life then it's just a celebration of their life but someone that is young then it's like a tragedy then it's hard to see it as a celebration it is more just see it as sorrow and heartbreak but in terms of the whole experience I see it as a way of kind of reinforcing our roots and kind of just, I see it as just kind of like a way of saying good-bye to someone but coming closer together as a group as well kind of thing and that kind of stuff

Nina expressed that attending and being a part of tangihanga was important to her. This setting provided her with a time to rejoice in the person's life. Her experiences attending tangi as a young child and growing up also allowed her to

get used to seeing a dead body so that now she is not afraid of the tūpāpaku. The tangi also allowed her to be with whānau and be able to express what the deceased person had meant to her. She shared that one of her favourite parts of the tangi was going around the room at the end of the night and sharing her experiences with others. She would listen to others and would laugh and enjoy the time to reminisce and celebrate the persons' life. Whilst reflecting on this Nina did express that this at times would be upsetting to her as she believed that it seemed sad to share how much a person meant to you after they had already passed on as she feels that it is important to share with your whānau and others what they mean to you in life and not just in death.

when I hear the word tangi I think like sadness, a goodbye, a cry but then from what I've experienced I think happy memories and sad yeah but yeah and then sometimes it's like you know when its stink with tangi because that's the only time you get to catch up with your cousins, and then it's like why couldn't we have this big talk and go around the room when he was still alive to hear it sort of thing you know instead of why do we wait till they are laying you know in the coffin to talk about you know how much they meant to us sort of thing that's the only sad thing

Most of the participants thought that the tangihanga was a time to celebrate a person's life together with loved ones. Most emphasised the importance of being together with family and feeling the joy of being together rather than focussing on the loss of a loved one as Rena explains,

it's celebrating their life because it's the last time that your seeing that person and basically just hanging and meeting new cousins or whānau and yeah basically just celebrating their last days with them and hanging out with family and being together and just showing them that you appreciated them and if they have done something for your family then you can help them and you can give back to them, and you can help their family and I always feel good helping in the kitchen

Courtney also emphasised the importance of being with her family and how she enjoyed being able to listen to other's memories of the deceased,

It's a time to say good bye and go and enjoy listening to everyone's memories and just catching up with everyone that has travelled to be there because there might be people you haven't seen for a while and that means a lot to me yeah definitely and so tangi provides an opportunity for you to have a reunion and meet with those family yeah and catch up

This theme was also felt by Keri as she expressed the tangi allowed her and others to show their support for the grieving family.

It's like a way to show your respect for the person, your love for the person that has passed away it's sort of like their last leg on earth sort of thing before they leave everybody and it's just a way to show your appreciation for them and then also like paying your condolences to the family and hoping to encourage them in a time where you know it's just a bad time really, yeah it's a support thing

The majority of the participants expressed the importance of the role that tangihanga played in providing them with an environment where they felt safe to share their grief, emotions and experiences with others. The women shared that they felt that another important aspect of tangi was the ability to be there for other family members and the bereaved. Research carried out in the field of bereavement has found that funerals provide structure for people of all ages to comfort each other, to mourn openly, and to honour the person who died (Aumen, 2007). This is how the participants felt about the tangihanga setting many explained that it provided them with opportunities to serve or assist others who were mourning.

These findings reiterate the value that being involved in the tangihanga has for these young women. The tangihanga provided a safe place for the young women to express their grief, learn more about their culture and strengthen relationships with friends and family. Much of the previous research mentioned supports the notion of active involvement and identification with one's culture.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **CONCLUSION**

This study set out to discover the meanings that are created and the learning that is experienced for young Māori women while at tangi. The institutions in which the young women learn and develop their identity were also of interest. The attitudes that young women held towards their involvement at tangi was also investigated.

The tangihanga is a cultural institution where the rituals and customs of Māori are enacted. It is also a time of grief and sadness as people farewell the deceased. The participants in this research all shared the many experiences they had whilst at tangi. These experiences included the loss of close family members, spending time with family, working on the marae and interacting and taking part in marae tikanga and protocols. The young women discussed their roles within the marae and the obligations that they felt whilst in attendance of tangi. They also shared their understandings towards death and traditional practices, explaining from their own perspectives why things were done a certain way. The participants also shared what they enjoyed the most and what was least enjoyable about their time while at tangi and what tangi meant for them personally.

When looking at the aims of this study and reviewing the discussed in the literature review it appears that the tangihanga provides an environment where cultural knowledge is shared with young women. The women are socialised into the environment by observing and interacting with older members of the group. The participants shared that predominantly it would be older female family members that would help train the girls into their roles whilst at the marae. The family of the participants played a major importance for the young women in sharing grief but also in providing support and assistance. The young women shared the importance of being able to work together with family and help others. For them working on the marae provided positive emotions towards others it also helped them feel connected and part of the collective. The participants shared their emotions, attitudes and experiences while at tangi. The participants found tangihanga to be a place where they could learn more about their culture and an experience that sparked a desire to learn more. People were fare welled but the



grief was shared and expressed in an open environment the participants found support and comfort for themselves and of others. Although there was a diverse amount of experience amongst the participants all shared the importance of being involved in this significant event was for them.

### **Implications of this research**

From this research we gain a clearer understanding of how young people may feel towards some of the traditional aspects of tangihanga. Many of the young women enjoyed the feeling of taking part in cultural practices but at times they struggled due to a lack of knowledge and understanding. This may be of concern as these young women may eventually be in the role of teaching and passing on their knowledge of these traditions to future generations. It is important that the transference of cultural knowledge continues and thus participating and attending tangi is vital as it provides opportunities for young people to learn and develop in this area.

For all of the young women an older family member such as a grand-mother or mother was a vital element in transferring the knowledge of the roles and responsibilities' that they young women were expected to fulfil whilst at tangi. Some of these roles included working in the kitchen, taking part in powhiri, singing songs and looking after older family members. It will be important for these relationships to be supported and encouraged as the older family members were vital in providing the young women with instruction during the tangihanga.

The participants had varied amounts of experience with tangi attendance but all shared their thoughts towards the meaning of the tangihanga process for them. This research aimed to put across the perspectives of young Māori women and attempted to gain a clearer understanding of the experiences of these young women at the tangihanga. The experiences shared by the participant's advocates for the tangihanga as being an environment that encourages, supports and helps form identity. Although some of the participants had limited access to cultural environments due to a number of reasons they all expressed an attitude of respect for the traditions and a desire to learn more.

The findings of this research suggest that the tangi plays an important role in young people's lives as it provides them with access to Māori communities and cultural learning. This is important for young people as it helps them to form a secure cultural identity. Thus the challenge for us today is to ensure that these opportunities continue to occur for young Māori women, that they are provided and supported in their cultural development.

### **Limitations of this study**

It is important to address some limitations of this study. Firstly, the small sample size makes it hard to make generalisations about the findings. The women were also interviewed in only two regions; Waikato and Wellington. A couple of the participants had links with Northland but there was still not a fair representation of young women from other regions within New Zealand. The findings may have been different if I had ensured to recruit participants from other regions.

Another limitation of this study was the inconsistencies with the interview schedules used with participants. Only two participants were interviewed a second time with the second interview schedule. If all of the participants have been re-interviewed using the second interview schedule the study could have possibly received a wider range of opinions regarding death and spiritual beliefs around death. There were also inconsistencies in the responses from the participants. This may have been due to a number of reasons such as the age of the participants, the topic of death or funerals and the inexperience of the researcher in drawing out responses from the participants.

Another limitation that may be viewed of this study was that the aim was to gain adolescent experiences of tangi but the interviewees were slightly older than this age group (18-24) is normally considered to be. So for parts of this project the interviews responses were retrospective, it may be useful to interview a younger group of participants in order to fully gain access to the adolescent experiences of young women at tangihanga.

### **Areas for future research**

This study is one of a small body of growing research investigating tangihanga. Although this is one of the first of its kind in exploring the contemporary

meanings of tangihanga with regards to young Māori women's experiences. So this study may act as a starting point for further research in this area. Future research areas could include:

- A broader study of this topic with a wider range of participants from different parts of the country, representing different iwi around New Zealand.
- An investigation into the roles and responsibilities of young Māori men at tangihanga may also be of interest.
- Investigations on how cultural traditions and knowledge are transferred to young women in family with Pākehā and Māori parents
- Investigating other important cultural occasions on the marae or other settings and the benefits that this has for young women today

From this study we have gained valuable insight into the experiences of young Māori women while at tangihanga. The young women found the tangi to be a place of learning and an environment that helped them to negotiate bereavement and loss in a supported setting.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet**

University of Waikato

Psychology Department

### **Information sheet**

#### **Research Project: Tangihanga: Through the eyes of young Māori women. - A study as part of the Tangi Research Programme**

**Name of Researcher:** Hemaima Wihongi (Graduate Researcher)

**Tangi Research Programme Leaders:** Prof Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, AProf Linda Waimarie Nikora & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Name of Supervisor:** A.Prof Linda Waimarie Nikora & A.Prof Doug Boer

#### **What is the Study about?**

You are invited to take part in a study that will explore the experiences that young Māori Women have had with Tangihanga. The aim of this research is to explore these experience the meanings that are created, the learning that may be experienced and the social relationships that are negotiated through the process of tangihanga. The contribution that tangihanga makes to mediating bereavement, grief and loss will also be explored. This research will be conducted as part of a broader research project conducted through the Māori Psychology Research Unit within the University of Waikato. This research will seek to broaden understandings around the practices, beliefs and meanings that are associated with the processes of Tangihanga as experienced by young Māori women. You have been asked to take part in this study because you have identified yourself as being A Māori women aged between 18-24 years and have had some experiences around the tangihanga process.

#### **What will I be asked to do?**

We would like you to agree to be interviewed about your experiences. Prior to the interview, you will be contacted by the researcher to discuss a suitable time to meet and discuss any issues that you may have concerning the interview process, the interview will then follow. The interview may take about an hour or more depending on what you would like to tell/ share.

The interview may be with you individually or with others whom you may wish to have present. We would like to explore the following topics with you, but would also encourage you to share your experiences in the way that you feel most comfortable.

Following the interview it may be necessary to follow up with you (either in person or over the phone) any points that may need clarification.

### **What will happen with my information?**

The interview will be audio-taped and the researcher may take written notes during the interview. You may also want to share other things with us like objects or images. From these things, we will develop a summary report of the interview organised around the themes noted above. We will return the report to you for comment, amendment or withdrawal of information. You will be asked to return your summaries and comments, a revised summary report will be resent to you within 2 weeks.

The summary report from your interview will be added to reports of interviews we do with others to see where there are similarities or differences in experiences. Ultimately the lead researcher, Hemaima Wihongi, will complete a graduate Directed Study and Masters Thesis which will be made publicly available. A copy of the summary of the findings of this study will be made available to you upon completion.

### **Who is collecting the information and conducting the study?**

I am a Masters student from the Department of Psychology at the University of Waikato. I will be supervised by Dr Linda Waimarie Nikora and Douglas Boer. This project is part of a wider project titled the Tangihanga Research Programme being undertaken by the Māori & Psychology Research Unit at the University of Waikato. This research is an academic study upon Māori traditional and contemporary cultural practices associated with dying, death and bereavement. The contact details for the principle researchers are provided at the bottom of this information sheet. You are welcome to make contact with them if you have any questions regarding this research.

The interview will be guided by the following discussion points:

\* Your experiences at tangi - tell us about those tangi you have attended... (How many, where, of who, how long (1hr - 3 days))

\* Of those tangi you have attended, what do you usually do? (Who with, where how long, why) (Distinguish between 1hr-3 days)

\* When you're at tangi, what do you usually talk with others about? (Who with, where, how long, why) (Distinguish between 1hr-3 days)

\* Of the tangi you have attended, what usually happens around the tupapaku? (Who with, where, how long, why) (Distinguish between 1hr-3days). What are usually doing at these times?

\* What things about tangi do you most enjoy?

\* What things about tangi do you least enjoy?

\* What do tangi mean to you?

\* Any general comments

### **What are my rights and what can I expect from the researcher?**

You can:

- Ask questions at any point during the study.
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off any point during the interview.
- Decline to answer any specific questions.
- Withdraw from the research at any point during or after the interview.

- At any time during the research project ask to have the information you have provided changed if incorrect, added to or ask to have information removed.
- Expect to receive a summary of the final report and be given details of how to access the full report.
- Contact myself or my supervisors if you have any concerns, questions or would like further information about the study.
- Expect that the information you provide will be kept confidential and any identifying names or details are removed or disguised so that people will not recognise you in what has been written.
- Expect that information you provide will be kept in secure storage during the study and once the study is completed the audio recordings and transcripts (written records of the audio recordings) will be deleted and/or destroyed.

### **Contact Details**

Research Supervisor: A.Prof Linda Waimarie Nikora, Psychology Department

Email: [psyc2046@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:psyc2046@waikato.ac.nz)

Telephone: 07 8562889 ext.8200

Researcher: Hemaima Wihongi

Email : [hw30@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:hw30@waikato.ac.nz)

Telephone : 07 8478532

## Appendix 2: Consent Form

University of Waikato

Psychology Department

### CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT'S COPY

Research Project: Tangihanga: Through the eyes of young Māori women.

Name of Researcher: Hemaima Wihongi

Name of Supervisor (if applicable): A Prof. Linda Nikora

I have received an information sheet about this research project or the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had the chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee (Dr Robert Isler, phone: 838 4466 ext. 8401, e-mail r.isler@waikato.ac.nz)

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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University of Waikato  
Psychology Department

## CONSENT FORM

RESEARCHER'S COPY

Research Project:

Name of Researcher:

Name of Supervisor (if applicable):

I have received an information sheet about this research project or the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had the chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 3: Participant Summary Report Deposit Form

University of Waikato

Psychology Department

### Summary Report Deposit Form

PARTICIPANT'S COPY

*Research Project: Tangihanga: Through the eyes of young Māori women. - A study as part of the Tangi Research Programme*

**Name of Researcher:** Hemaima Wihongi (Graduate Researcher)

**Tangi Research Programme Leaders:** Prof Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, AProf Linda Waimarie Nikora & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Name of Supervisor:** AProf. Linda Waimarie Nikora & A.Prof Doug Boer

I have received a summary report of my interview. I have had an opportunity to make comment, suggest revisions or to have information withdrawn. I consent to the summary report of my interview becoming part of this study.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_